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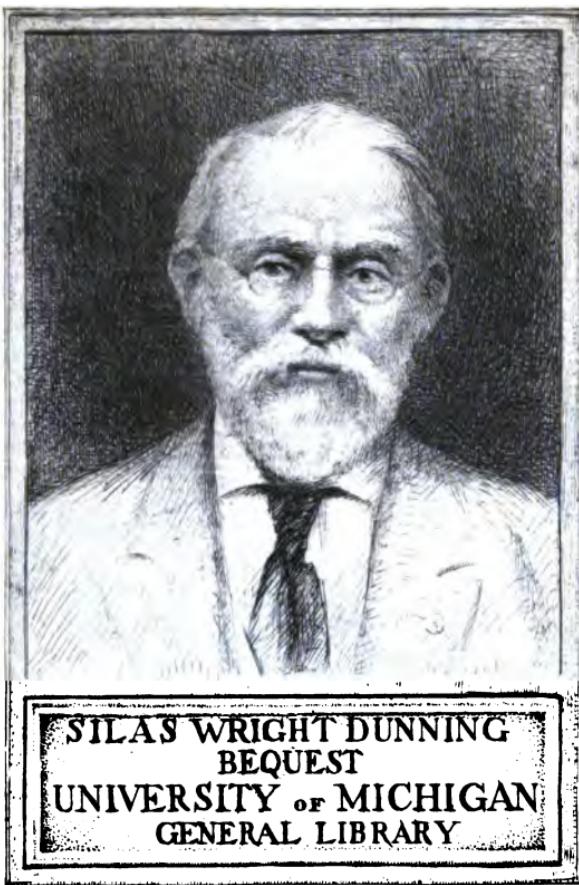
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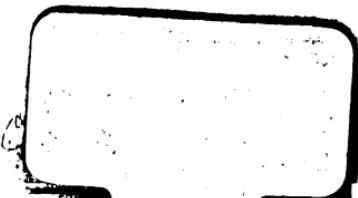
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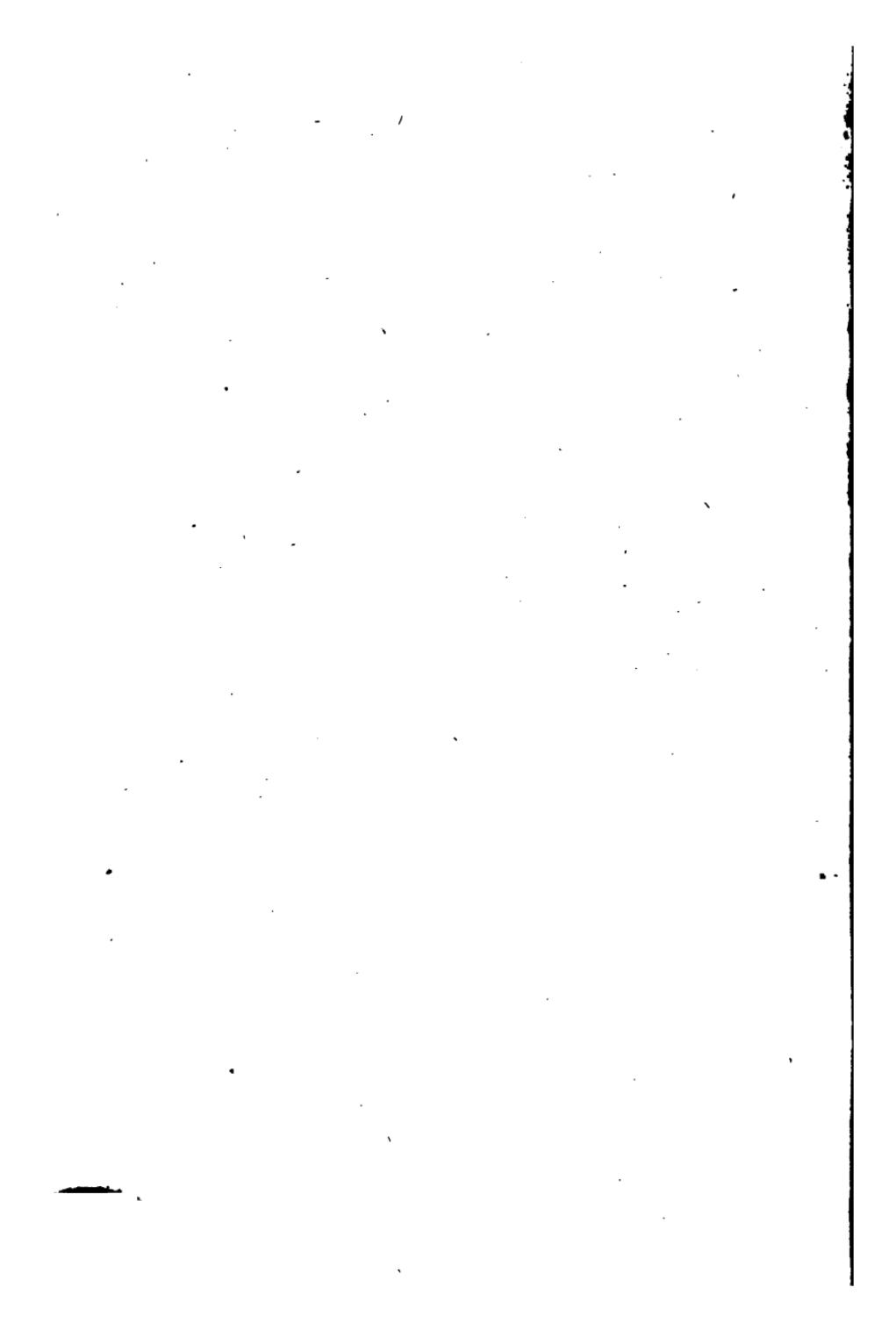
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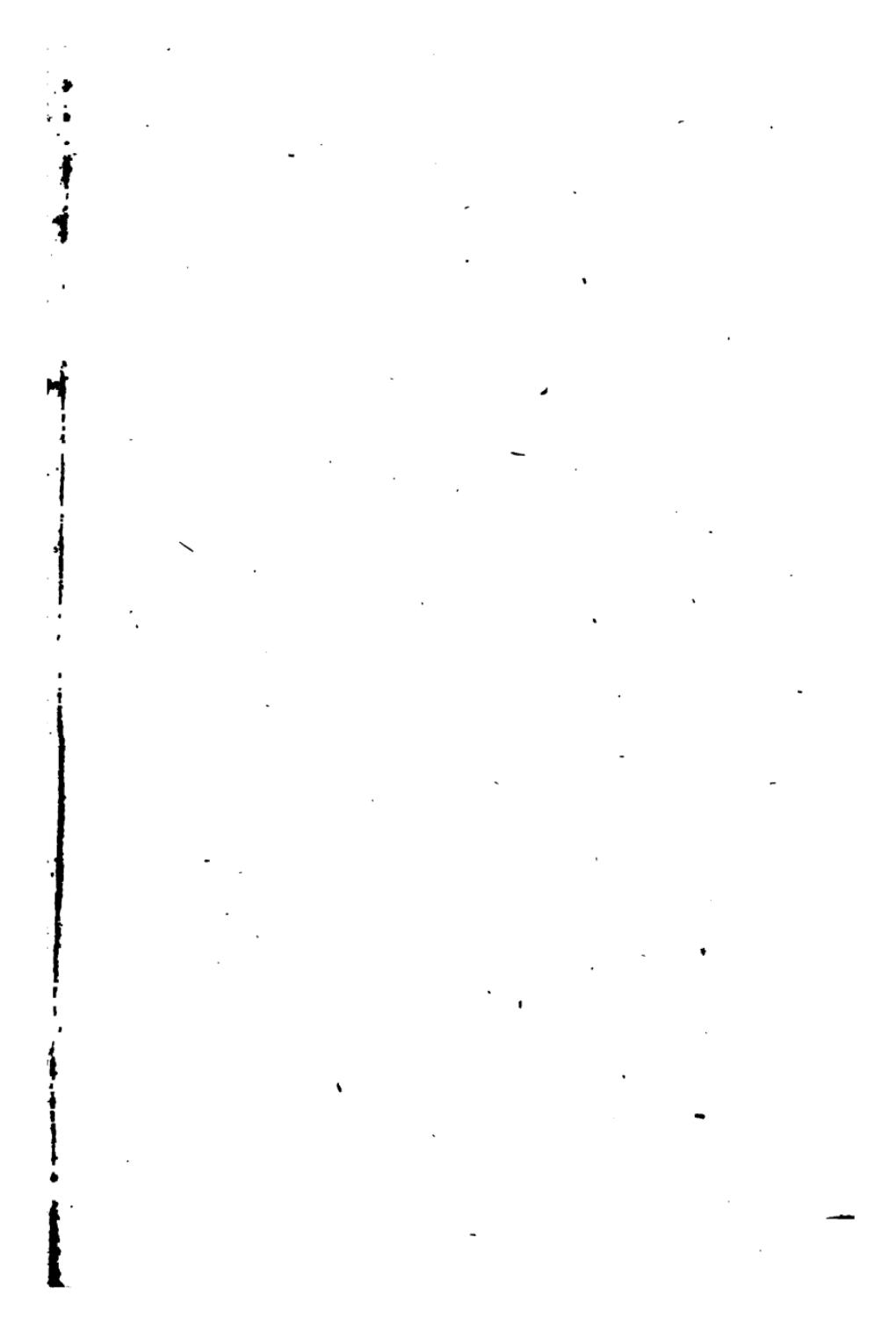


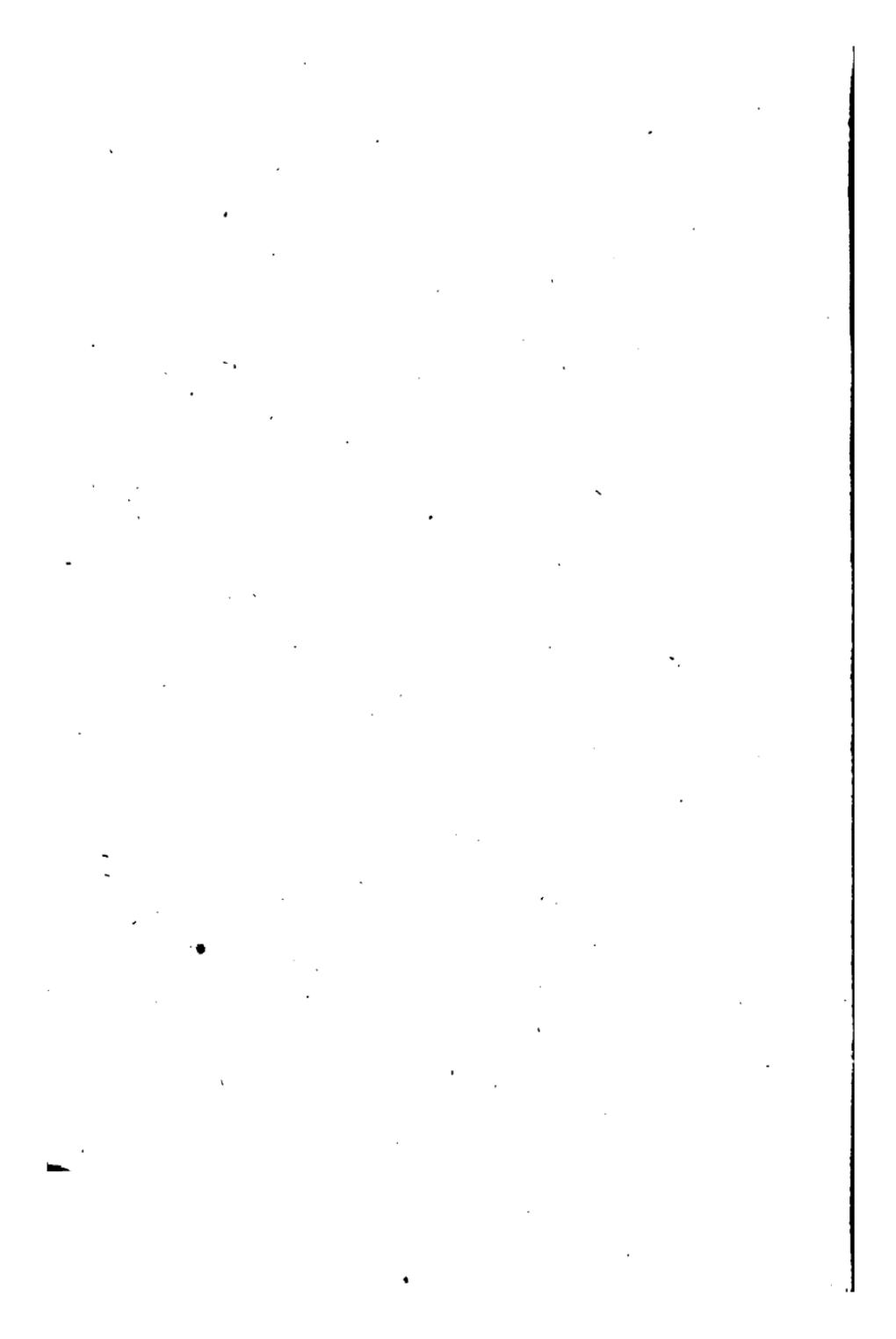
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THE YOUNG WIDOW;

OR,

THE HISTORY

OF

CORNELIA SEDLEY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

EDWARD BROWN'S EDITION

THE TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

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EDWARD BROWN'S EDITION

THE TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Hayley, William

THE YOUNG WIDOW;
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IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

Non per election, ma per destino.

PETRARCH.

VOLUME III.

L O N D O N:

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DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED PHYSICS



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CORNELIA, &c.

LETTER I.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

I SEND off a servant express to stop our dear Edmund, if he is not already on his way to this house, so lately the scene of hope and exultation, and now of despondency and wretchedness, of wretchedness produced from the most idle piece of folly that ever was heard of. Alas ! my dear

VOL. III.

B

Lucy,

Lucy, all our high-raised hopes are, I fear, overthrown for ever. Seymour himself has ruined all, in a fit of intoxication, or rather of frenzy. Surely wine was an invention of the devil, to render man an image of himself. My father takes the part I apprehended he would on the slightest opportunity of this kind. My dear Audley is labouring with his usual goodness to repair the mischief that intemperance has produced; but I am afraid it is irreparable. Poor Cornelia is more dead than alive; but, as the man and horse are waiting, I will dispatch this immediately; and send you particulars by the post. I am anxious that you and my brother should now remain at home, as I am persuaded your friend will not continue here under his present disgrace,

but

but will fly to you for consolation and counsel.

No words can express how grieved to the heart I am for this provoking destroyer of his and our felicity, and still more for the unoffending sufferer. Farewell: the moment I have sealed this I shall begin a full account of the bitter change in our scene, as I know you will sympathise but too deeply with

Your mortified, yet not utterly

hopeless and ever affectionate,

HARRIOT.

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

A LAS ! my dear Lucy, I feel so dispirited, exasperated, and bewildered, so intoxicated in short with rage against intoxication, that I can hardly collect soberness of spirit sufficient to give you the sad circumstantial history that I have promised. How very grievous is it to have seen the most delightful of human prospects so foolishly and miserably blasted in a moment ! Ah ! my dear girl, what inconsiderate wretches are those captivating men ! I am almost inclined to think you perfectly right, in having renounced

nounced them entirely. It is no wonder that the complaints of human infelicity are so frequent. How many, many virtues, are required, to form that rare, and lovely spectacle, happiness! and how able is a single vice to produce in an instant that common and deplorable sight, extensive misery! You will not be surprised that I am sunk into this moralizing fit, since, as poor Calista says on a very different occasion,

Here's room for meditation e'en to madness.

Our present trouble is the more bitter, because the prelude to it was a scene of the purest pleasure that I ever experienced. I must begin by telling you, that yesterday happened to be the birth-day of the eldest Sedley. Sey-

mour, who is passionately fond of this charming boy, requested that the day might be celebrated with peculiar festivity ; and that, to render it a double jubilee, it might be fixed for the wed-
ing-day of Monson and Caroline : my father, who exults in all festivity that carries a religious sanction along with it, not only joined in the request, but desired to have the pleasure of uniting this lovely couple : you will believe this busines was readily adjusted without a dissentient, or even a hesitating voice ; for Caroline, though truly mo-
dest, has not a grain of prudery in her composition. Seymour, who was re-
covered enough to attend theceremony, which was performed in the chapel here, acted as father to the bride, with his usual elegance of manners ; and visibly felt emotions, not inferior to those

those of a real parent on the occasion. Here I wished not a little for you, my dear Lucy; for, as you think a wedding where youth and beauty are united, with genuine affection, a very touching drama, you must have shed many delicious tears had you been with us: there was no creature present but ourselves, and five servants of the family: my father read the service with peculiar energy and feeling, and the whole scene was conducted with such devout decency, and universal delight, that for my part I wept, I believe, from one end of it to the other: how poor Cornelia was affected I really cannot tell you, for she very ingeniously contrived to conceal her face the whole time; but she did not escape from the chapel without a visible crimson blush, which the tender Caroline very innocently occasioned.

casioned. The gentlemen, as usual, paid their compliment to the bride; but, as soon as Seymour had touched her lip, this charming girl, who is perfectly the child of nature, dropt on her knee, and, kissing his hand, said to him, with all the enthusiasm of simplicity and gratitude, "May Heaven, Sir, soon make you as happy as you have now made your two grateful dependents! I should deserve to lose the husband you have given me, if I departed from the altar without uttering this prayer of my heart." Most of the party smiled at the native innocence and thankful energy of her devotion, Seymour raised and kissed her again in a rapture of reciprocal gratitude, while poor Cornelia was covered, not with one blush, but a succession of blushes; which I leave you, my dear Lucy, to interpret as you please.

please. You, I know, will interpret them as a sort of silent counterpart to the audible prayer of Caroline. Why, good Heaven, was the prayer of so pure and fervent a spirit to be rejected? Why was the well-deserved happiness of this excellent couple to be poisoned so cruelly just in its completion?—Poisoned it certainly is; for these good grateful creatures are too warmly attached to their benefactor, to enjoy even their union, now they find he is unhappy. He has indeed made himself completely so for the present, and perhaps for the rest of his days.

I am called from my paper to attend my husband and our afflicted hostess. Adieu for some hours; I will resume my narration the first moment that I am at liberty.

I return

I return to you, my dear Lucy, with a spirit both saddened and comforted by what I have been witness to since I quitted my pen. You will join with me, I am sure, in loving my dear indulgent Audley still better, if possible, than ever, when I tell you what pains he is taking to counteract the horrid incidents of yesterday which I am still to relate to you. Before I enter upon them I must acquaint you that my husband has just put Seymour into our chaise, to convey him in his present humiliated, yet still too fiery state of spirits, to a scene of solitude and friendship. They are to pass two days alone together at our house, and return to us on the third ; this is a benevolent project of my husband's, from which he has great expectations ; I am to remain here with my father, and to
keep

keep him, if possible, in a sort of silent neutrality, that we may all meet again without any discord ; passing (to use my dear Audley's parliamentary phrase) an act of indemnity and oblivion. I most heartily wish indeed that we could all swallow a cup of Lethe, and entirely forget the evening of yesterday. As soon as I have fulfilled my promise of imparting to you in this pacquet the circumstances that have rendered it so detestable, I shall strive with all my spirit to banish them, not only from my own remembrance, but from that of our poor Cornelia, on whose tender bosom they have made the most deep and cruel impression ; an impression which, if it is, as my father asserted, the provident work of Heaven, I must not expect, and I should not wish, to erase. But there is, as you and I have often agreed,

a severity

a severity in his doctrine, to which I cannot immediately subscribe. I was at first, indeed, most bitterly provoked against Seymour: he ought to have been more on his guard at such a time and in such a place; yet such are the particulars of the case, that he seems to me much more entitled to compassion than to censure, and I cannot help thinking it a barbarous fatality that made him wretched just at the season when the beneficent exertion of his many virtues had given him the fairest title to happiness. It was the most trifling circumstance imaginable that produced all the mischief. You know, my father is no enemy to moderate festivity; or, as your brother said of him, he has a true priestly relish for an orthodox bottle. As our ill fortune would have it, he chanced, two days before

our

our humble wedding, to commend before Seymour some very rich and rare wine ; its name I forget ; it is not *tokay*. Seymour recollects that he had a little store of it in his cellar, which a foreign ambassador had presented to his father ; and he instantly resolved to produce a hamper of it at the wedding-dinner, and to honour the birth-day of the dear little Sedley. We all exclaimed against it as an impossibility ; it could not arrive in time ; no matter, it must be attempted : you know the foible of our hero ; his ardent spirit pursues even a sportive whim of his fancy, as if it was a point on which the safety of an empire depended. His favourite servant was sent off, and commanded to return with a hamper in a post-chaise by the time appointed. The fellow travelled day

and night; but you know the great distance of Seymour's country-seat from this house. The expected wine did not arrive for the capital toasts after dinner; yet in the universal joy of the day it was hardly regretted. The evening came, and we were all sober and happy, though the gentlemen seemed a little elated by what they had drunk. Cornelia, however, had drawn them from their bottles to her tea-table, to which, at my particular desire, the bride and bridegroom were admitted, for I was solicitous to save the modest Caroline from that jocular and coarse festivity which I knew would prevail in the lower part of the house: as it was, my father put her once out of countenance before us; it is strange that old men are always on these occasions more gross than young ones. Here, I must

must do him the justice to say, our favourite Seymour appeared to great advantage. His conversation, though very lively, was delicate in the extreme; and thus far, indeed, it was a day of delight. It was now late in the evening; but, just as the tea-table was removed, and preparation was making for a quiet game of cards, the fatal hamper arrived. Seymour instantly exclaimed, “Come, Doctor, you shall drink the health of the day in your favourite wine. Come, Monson, it would be barbarous to pin a bridegroom to a card-table, especially as it is high time for the ladies to begin undressing the bride. We will leave them to that ceremony, and drink to the general joy of the whole house below.” With this festive exclamation he carried off my father to his wine, leading also young Sedley in his

his hand. He promised Cornelia, however, that he would only suffer the child to have half a glass of the new wine, and restore him instantly to her care ; a promise which he performed very faithfully, and in person imprinting a kiss on the fair hand of the parent, in placing the charming but tired and sleepy boy on her bosom.

Would to Heaven he had taken as good care of himself ! My heart felt a melancholy presage in the very moment when he seized my father by the arm, and I gave my husband a caution to watch over them both ; which he would certainly have done, had not a most unseasonable accident called him from the party. The happy Monson, who is as temperate as he is brave, could not be tempted beyond a second glass ; after which, in spite of their raillery,

rillery, he stote away to the arms of his expecting Caroline. In a few minutes after he left the company, my dear Audley was most unluckily intrusted by the old Butler to terminate a foolish quarrel between one of our servants and one of Cornelia's. This idle fray detained him much longer than he was aware, and on his return to the parlour he found Seymour and my father both flushed with wine, and both still more heated by argument, with the large Family Bible laying open between them; my father venting his indignation with great vehemence against the prophanieness of Seymour; and Seymour playing numerous and unutterable tricks of impious buffoonery. In vain did my dear Audley endeavour to put them into good humour with each other, and get them quietly to

bed. Finding this impracticable, he conceived a desperate project, of which you will hardly think him capable, but for which you will give him the more credit. This was, to make the two disputants completely drunk, that they might entirely forget what they had uttered against each other, and lose every trace of their religious dissension. He says, he thought himself supremely politic in this scheme, and was flattered with a momentary gleam of success; but Seymour, by an unfortunate allusion to the marriage in Cana, rekindled the furious zeal of my father, who, after uttering the bitterest rebuke to the young intoxicated infidel, quitted the room in a tempest of pious indignation. Seymour, whose volatile spirits were now raised to the most

most frantic merriment, wanted first to detain and then to follow him. This, however, my husband prevented, and by great exertions kept his wild companion from exposing himself to the servants. Alas! my dear Lucy, what a strange night of mingled joy and horror was this! the different scenes of it are so deeply impressed on my mind, that I think they can never depart from my memory as long as I exist; and they will frequently appear as actually passing before me. But you are impatient for the sequel. Well; after a little pause, and a few deep sighs, I will proceed.

Cornelia and I had just attended the lovely bride to her chamber. We had received her last maidenly adieu! and left the charming agitated girl in a sweet disorder of tremors, tenderness,

and tears. From her room we had retired to that of Cornelia, where in two little beds on each side her own, and under one canopy, her beautiful boys lay, like two little angels, asleep. Our lovely friend, whose tender nerves had been much affected in taking leave of Caroline, seated herself at the feet of her bed, and looked, as I was saucy enough to tell her, like a more hapless heroine described by Rowe :

“ Warm, tender, full of wishes.”

While I was rallying the gentle creature on her passion for Seymour, and the great chance he would have of success if he could press her to an immediate marriage at that moment; while the dear candid soul more than half confessed that I was right in reading the emotions of her heart; the door suddenly

deily opened upon us, and in rushed my father, to warn the mistress of the mansion against harbouring such an impious wretch as Seymour under her roof.

Think, my dear Lucy, what I endured at this moment; and paint to yourself the sweet countenance of our Cornelia, changing at once from the soft expression of tenderness, love, and hope, to the troubled looks of surprise, remorse, and despair. I endeavoured to hurry my father from her chamber; but he was not in a mood to be either wheedled or controuled. He was certainly a little inflamed by wine; yet his faculties were rather quickened than impaired; and though he spoke with great austerity against the favourite object of our wishes, I must confess that I never heard him so

eloquent in my life. He told Cornelia that, after the horrid blasphemies to which he had been witness below, he should think himself deficient in his duty to earth and heaven, if he failed to caution her against the peril in which he saw her involved. He then represented the dangers of marrying a young man of strong passions, without a particle of religion, with such vehemence of language, and force of imagery, that for my part I felt a cold horror strike through me, and poor Cornelia was thrown into sobs and tears.

When he perceived her weeping, he grew infinitely gentler in his manner, and, folding her hand within his, said, with a parental emotion, "I pity you from my soul: I see to what excess you love this alluring, this pernicious infidel.

fidel. And how could you do otherwise than love him? He is the most seducing of mortals, a man who might easily tempt half your sex to make themselves the greatest of wretches! But consider, my dear lady, what dignity and firmness of character we have a right to expect from you. I will not argue the matter as a point of reason and judgment: but consult the best feelings of sensibility; look at these little monitors (pointing to her children) and ask your own bosom if any partiality, any passion, however founded on the most dazzling of human attractions, can justify you to your own heart, if you give to these innocents for their example, their guide, their father, an absolute monster of impiety." The feeling mother was almost suffocated by her tears on this

pointed address to her maternal chacter. Perceiving that she had no power to speak, and wishing (to own the truth) that she should not find an opportunity, lest she should utter some precipitate resolution, for which we might all be sorry in a cooler moment; I ventured to argue with my father, at the imminent hazard of enraging him still more, in behalf of the dear abominable delinquent. I said, it was cruel to let a few words, however impious, uttered by an intoxicated man, cancel the merit of actions, not only splendid in point of generosity and courage, but distinguished by the true spirit of Christian charity.. In short, I was bold in the defence of poor Seymour, and did ample and affectionate justice to those virtues by which he has raised himself so high in our esteem. My father heard

heard me with a degree of temper and patience that I did not expect. He did not once interrupt me; but he said, as soon as I paused; " My dear Harriot, I do not blame you for looking with a fond and enthusiastic admiration on the noble and captivating accomplishments of this dangerous Seymour; but, trust me, to marry a young man possessing all these attractions, and hiding under them a deep mass of impiety, is exactly like building a delightful palace in the tempting neighbourhood of Vesuvio. For a while you may be charmed with your situation; the air is delicious, the prospect enchanting; but a sudden and unexpected burst of the latent fire converts the gay residence of delusive security into a scene of the most terrific devastation. Believe me, there is nothing in the human character,

character, on which it is safe to build, but the solid rock of Religion." Encouraged by the mildness with which my father had listened to me before, I attempted to moderate in some degree the austerity and intolerance of this maxim. By this attempt I unluckily rekindled his indignation ; and he said to me in a very severe tone, " Harriot, you are the last person in the world who ought to appear as an advocate for Irreligion ; have the gratitude and the decency to recollect, that all the rare happiness of your own life arises from my having given you a man of genuine piety for your husband." Then turning to Cornelia, he said, " Madam, you know how ardently I love my child ; yet, I protest to you before God, I would rather have seen her sink into the grave in all the bloom of her youth

and

and beauty, than I would have bestowed her on such a character as I am now endeavouring to caution you against." He added a short, but impassioned prayer, that his caution might prove effectual; and then, giving us both his benediction, retired for the night.

As soon as we were alone, our lovely friend fell upon my neck, and wept most bitterly. She could not yet speak, but grasped my hand with the vehemence of a poor creature in agonies of pain. There was at this time a conflict in her heart and soul, more excruciating, perhaps, than any maladies of the body. She traversed her chamber with an agitated step; paused, looked at her children, wept, and walked again. I tried to soothe her by making light of what had passed; by representing it as a foolish dispute over a bottle,

that

that would be utterly forgot the next day ; but the lovely angel rebuked me with a look of displeasure, and exclaimed, " No, my dear Harriot, you must not any longer flatter and confirm me in this criminal attachment. I do not vainly strive to hide from you with what excess of passion I love Seymour at this moment. Yea, I love him with that frenzy, that, if only the Perdition of my own soul was hazarded by our union, perhaps I could not reject him ; but for these dearer souls" — Here she cast her eyes again upon the sweet sleeping boys ; her voice was suspended ; but falling on her knee, at the feet of her own bed, so that she had an equal view of the two children, and raising to Heaven, perhaps, the most beautiful and impassioned countenance that ever looked up to its Creator,

she

she said, with a trembling voice, "By the Almighty God who gave me these blessed infants, and by the dear faint whose dying injunction commended them to my duty, I swear that no temptations shall induce me to make the impious Seymour their second father. I will never marry again." The last words she pronounced in a firmer and even a triumphant accent, for they were the dictates of duty and passion united. To sacrifice the man she doated on to Heaven was a resolve, which, though her mind was firm in its purpose, her lips could hardly utter; but to renounce all the sex in honor of this dear victim, was a fond idea in which her heart exulted; it was granting, under the mask and yet with the sanction of duty, a secondary triumph to Love.

Ah !

Ah! my dear Lucy, do you not shudder at the thought of what our poor lovely friend must have to endure, either in keeping, or in violating this precipitate vow? For my part, I have the audacity, and I know, my good girl, you will support me in it, still to profess myself an advocate for this abominable offender. I cannot bear the idea of his being utterly renounced; and I maintain that not only Love and Friendship, but Religion itself ought to induce us all not to irritate and abandon, but to soothe him, and labour for his conversion. If we succeed, and from the gentle, firm, and 'persuasive spirit' of my dear Audley, I have great hopes of success, the hasty vow of our dear righteous widow becomes void of course; we shall still be happy, and our happiness will be truly cœlestial. I en-
deavoured

deavoured to calm our dear Cornelia, by talking to her in this strain as soon as she had finished her adjuration ; and, troubled as her spirit was, it did not turn with abhorrence from this kind of consolation. See, my dear Lucy, how well it is for a tender scrupulous sweet soul, like our Cornelia, to have such kind considerate commentators at her elbow as you and I are, when she is in the rash humour of vowing a vow ! While I was administering to her the comfort which she found in seeing that her hasty promise to Heaven was conditional, I heard a gentle tap at her door. Behold my husband ; " For Heaven's sake, said I, what have you done with Seymour ? has not this fatal wine made him frantic ?" " Be not alarmed, returned my good man, looking keenly on the anxious eager countenance of

Cornelia,

Cornelia. He has, indeed, been a little disguised, by a slight excess in drinking: but this is not surprizing after his recent low regimen, and on such a day as this; his intemperance only proves the affectionate warmth of his heart; it is now time for us all to retire, as I have put him very peaceably to bed."

"Excellent, cried I, in a transport of joy, and now we may all sleep in peace."

In saying this, I gave a significant pressure to the hand of Cornelia, and we both wished her good night. And here, Lucy, I must take leave of you also with the same good wish. I can positively write no longer at present, but will resume my pen early to-morrow; so once more good night.

Not-

Notwithstanding my presage that we should all sleep in peace, few mortals in health pass a night so sleepless on their pillow as we did. Cornelia confessed to me the next day, that she had hardly closed her eyes; and as to Audley and myself, we were kept awake, first by talking over all the wild vagaries and extravagancies of Seymour in his cups; and, secondly, by meditating on the best possible method of reconciling him and my father, and drawing good out of evil. I have already told you the project, my dear girl, which your incomparable brother has devised for this purpose. He rose early, awakened the poor unconscious culprit into a sense of his trespass in the preceding evening; and conveyed him from hence without his seeing either of the two persons who had

most reason to be offended with his conduct. To both, however, he sent, at my husband's entreaty, and by his voice, a very humble and suppliant embassy; and particularly to my father, whom he requested to forget every syllable, if any such were uttered, in his intoxication, that could appear in any degree offensive or disrespectful to his character as a Divine. To his gentle hostess he made the most tender apology; said, he felt himself unworthy to enjoy the delight of seeing her the next day; but, as he was going to punish himself for his transgression by an immediate and self-imposed banishment from her presence, he trusted he should find her, on his return, more ready to pardon him than he was to forgive himself. You will easily guess how these messages were

re-

received by the two parties to whom they were addressed, as you know both so well. The tender widow said, that no apology was necessary to her: the rigid Divine declared, that none was sufficient for him. I have had, indeed, a terrible task to keep the zeal of my father within tolerable bounds: but after a long private scene of argument, intreaty, and tears, on my part, I have prevailed on him to promise me that he will say nothing more to Cornelia on the subject at present. I have even brought him to acquiesce in my opinion, that the state of Seymour's affection, co-operating with the eloquence of my husband, may probably produce a very salutary effect on the creed of this enchanting unbeliever. Heaven grant my earnest prayer on this point! I need not tell you with what anxiety

I expect their return. I wish it were possible to give you an account of it in this pacquet, as I know your solicitude on the subject will not be inferior to my own; but many anxious hours are yet to pass before the time of their expected arrival; and I have promised you this voluminous history by the very first post; you must accept it, therefore, imperfect as it is in every sense of that word. Be assured that you shall hear again soon; and believe me ever

Your affectionate sister.

P. S. I cannot close the paper without telling you, that the first sight I saw in entering Cornelia's chamber yesterday morning was our poor sleepless friend, venting her anguish to the sympathetic bosom of Caroline. What
a con-

a contrast in their situations! What a picture did their beautiful but differently impassioned features present to me! it was Felicity comforting Despair. Farewell.

LETTER III.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

YOU, who are so familiar with the past follies of my life, you, my dear Edmund, will not be surprised to hear that I have again played the fool more detestably than ever. I have made myself a wretch; I have disgraced myself in the eyes of my adored Cornelia. I am no longer under her roof. I have committed—but why should I particularize my execrable of-

fences to you, when you have probably learnt. (by means of the women who write about every thing) more circumstances of my misconduct than I know myself.

In a foolish desire to ingratiate myself with that odious high priest Dr. Ayton, who loves his bottle, pontifically, I drank with him, on a double festival that we have celebrated here, on the birth-day of the brave little Sedley, and the marriage of my sweet Caroline, till the Doctor lost his temper, and I my senses. All I can remember of the evening is, that we sputtered much pious and profane nonsense in the face of each other. Nothing could be so absurd; nothing so ill-timed; nothing so injurious to my love, as this execrable contention. I loath the sight of wine, and abhor myself for my folly.

folly?' ' Yet I have found an apologist and a comforter, where I little expected; and less perhaps deserved to find him; 'tis with peculiar satisfaction that I add—*in your Brother*. He has kindly hurried me from a scene where I have exposed and disgraced myself so egregiously, to his own tranquil mansion; with a thoughtful good-nature that proved him really your brother. He suggested to me, that my best mode of apologizing for what I most bitterly repent, would be to withdraw for a few days, leaving only a conciliatory message for the persons who have the greatest right to be offended by my gross indecorum. He observed, that by thus giving the insulted Divine sufficient time to grow cool, I might probably induce him to forget our dispute; and by shewing

Cornelia that I punished myself for my transgression towards her by tearing myself from her presence, I should incline her to receive me with indulgence on my return. By the force of these friendly reasons, your brother drew me to his house; we have now been under his roof the better part of two days alone, and during that time his incessant attention and kind behaviour to me has been such, that I cannot more strongly express my sense of it to you, than by telling you the words I addressed to him a few minutes ago, on our closing a private conference of some hours. They were the words of Agrippa to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!"

It has indeed been the eager wish of his benevolent heart to make me such on this important occasion; and if either

the impulse of Love, or the arguments of Friendship, could induce me to sacrifice my reason or my sincerity, I should certainly either feel or profess, at this critical juncture, a perfect reverence for mysteries, which my spirit, my dear Edmund, as well as yours, has ever considered as a mixture of the unintelligible and the ridiculous. I reverence, indeed, his ardent philanthropy, and I admire his happiness, which is, as I freely allowed him, superior to what you and I have ever enjoyed, or may ever attain ; but this, which he ascribes to his Religion, is the kind work of Nature ; it is owing to the constitutional equipoise of his passions, and the peculiar felicity of his temper. He is a man whom superstition cannot spoil ; and this, as I told him, is a grand panegyrick ; for the very

very best kind of superstition is apt to vitiate whatever it touches. I am not sure that even the pure, the tender, the generous bosom of my Cornelia herself can resist its influence.

At the instigation of that rigid and angry priest whom I have foolishly made my enemy, she may perhaps reject me for ever—reject the very man to whom she is, in truth, attached by affection, by gratitude, and every honest emotion of her frame. My soul is in tumult at this idea ! I am conscious that I have deserved to experience some little portion of her anger. I want no Gospel to tell me, that intoxication is a beastly failing. I am ready to purchase her forgiveness, by renouncing intemperance for ever ; but I have too much noble pride to purchase even her person, though it is

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the only jewel in the world to my apprehension, by making myself either a fool or a hypocrite. We return tomorrow. How she will receive me I know not : but if she treats me with a coldness and disdain which I am sure are foreign to her nature, I feel it may drive me to distraction. Good heavens! to lose such a lovely and loving creature, just when her delicious lips have half declared she is devoted to me by protesting she would have no other! Oh, the very idea is momentary madness! I will banish it from my brain. And surely the reality, my dear Edmund, would be too heavy a punishment for the offences, the involuntary and repented offences, of

Your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

L E T-

LETTER IV.

FROM MR. AUDLEY
TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

I TRUST that my last letter convinced you, my dear Edmund, how sincerely my heart is disposed to promote the wishes of your engaging friend. His very failings have increased my attachment to him, as they shew me, that, with a spirit peculiarly benevolent and generous to others, he is a most dangerous enemy to himself. My dear Harriot, who really feels for him all the solicitude of a sister, has given you, I conclude, a very melancholy detail of the foolish and provoking incidents that have produced a most uncomfortable change of scene in
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the house of our Cornelia. I brought Seymour to pass a few days with me in privacy, under my own roof, for two reasons: first, I was very desirous to prevent the renewal, and, if possible, to annihilate the memory, of a furious theological dispute, which arose between him and Dr. Ayton, in a luckless night of intemperate festivity. Secondly, I cherished a hope, that in the quiet of this sequestered scene, and in many successive hours of unreserved and friendly conversation, I might be fortunate enough to remove from the mind of this interesting young man the only obstacle to his happiness; I mean, that infidelity which seems to have fastened on his spirit, more from the power of accident than from any natural disposition in his character to produce or maintain it. It is with the
most

most cordial concern I perceive, that my powers of argument and persuasion are too weak to accomplish in your friend, my dear Edmund, as in you, that happy conversion which I most ardently wish to behold in you both. I have searched as deeply as I could the springs of incredulity in each of you ; and I find that these springs are very different ; but, alas ! they are equally powerful against my wish in your behalf. Rousseau, I think, has said, that the faith of most men is regulated upon earth by their temporal interest. This, however, is by no means the case with an English gentleman of independent fortune, whose creed has so little connexion with his temporal prosperity, that many parents in this rank of life, while they teach worldly maxims to their children,

think it unnecessary to burthen them with religious ideas. Thus young men are left to pick up such a religion as Time and Chance may happen to afford them. Their faith, of course, will greatly depend on their early connexions in life, and still more on their particular humours and passions. I think, my dear Edmund, that this remark is very strongly exemplified in you and your friend Seymour: in you, as I have often told you, infidelity is the offspring of a vitiated imagination: in Seymour, it is the child of an impious passion, and, I fear, the firmest of passions, pride. It pleased Heaven to give you, with a strong understanding, a much greater propensity to ridicule and sarcasm than is commonly united to a heart so tender as yours; the applause very justly given

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to your early wit and humour augmented this dangerous propensity; thus your mind was allured into the habit of considering even the most serious objects in a ludicrous point of view; your first associates in the world were unfortunately men who treated Christianity with derision; you were amused in laughing with them, and pleased to increase their merriment by your superior vivacity. But as the fire of youth abated, your natural good sense, my dear Edmund, soon taught you, on these articles, a great degree of caution and reserve: you ceased to ridicule Religion; but though prudence and good nature conspired to make you desist from a practice which you could not pursue without creating to yourself many enemies, you could not correct the internal mischief

which the habit, too long indulged, had impressed upon your mind. You could, indeed, cease to ridicule Religion; but you could not cease to think Religion ridiculous. The bias given to your youthful fancy was too powerful for your reason, even in its maturity, to counteract; and how many men have we seen turnable, in advanced life, to embrace the comforts of genuine piety, from no other cause but the having been idly tempted to laugh at them in their youth! It is difficult in the highest degree to bring the human spirit to contemplate with reverence what it has once been accustomed to treat with derision; and as to yourself, my dear Edmund, I am convinced, as I have often said to you, by my own ineffectual but affectionate endeavours to change the cast of your

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mind, that nothing but some great and unexpected calamity or sickness ; nothing, in short, but some striking event, that may convulse, as it were, like an earthquake, your whole bodily and intellectual frame, can take from your warped imagination that unfortunate bent which I have so frequently lamented. With your friend Seymour I had flattered myself on a prospect of better success : as his mind has not been so much under the fascination of ridicule, I hoped to find it more open to Reason. I was willing to think that even his passions might act as my confederates ; and that Love, which has settled, as you sportively said, the creed of many princes, might help me to make a happy convert of him ; but Love, I find, in its warmest excess, is a passion much weaker than Pride ;

Pride; at least it proves so in your friend. He doats upon Cornelia; but, with a firmness of proud incredulity which I both lament and admire, he will not purchase even the idol of his heart by what he considers a sacrifice of his own dignity as a man; nay, so tenacious is he of imaginary honour in this point, that if my long and repeated conferences had really converted him, he says he should be almost tempted to suppress his belief at this juncture, lest his friends should suppose that Love had made him an hypocrite in Religion: so vehement is his detestation to every shadow of duplicity and falsehood.

It is impossible not to love a character so open, so ingenuous, so ardent, and so firm, however deluded he may be: it is equally impossible (at least for

a man who thinks seriously of Religion), not to wish him possessed of the only thing which can render his enchanting qualities no longer dangerous to himself. You, my dear brother, have both experience and discretion, I might even say timidity, in the conduct of life, to protect you against the perils of your own foibles and passions ; but it is not so with our friend: undisguised in all he thinks, and precipitate in all he does, he is peculiarly exposed to the malice of fortune; and the more I reflect on his present situation, the more I am alarmed for what is to come. As to myself, he has reduced me to a most uncomfortable dilemma : I cannot take an active part in opposing his wishes, without wounding, not only my friendship for you, but those sentiments of regard with which he has inspired

spired me for himself. Nor can I be very earnest and decisive in promoting his hopes of marrying Cornelia, consistently with my conscience. I have the sincerest good wishes to them both; I clearly perceive they are so deeply enshrouded of each other, that they must be wretched asunder; yet, if they are suited, there is a prospect of equal, and perhaps of superior wretchedness, from their unhappy difference in the great article of Religion: an article, which the dying injunction of poor Sedley has rendered so peculiarly important to Cornelia, that I question indeed if Seymour, with the united powers of Love and Friendship, with his own attractions, and my recommendation (if I dared to recommend him) could triumph, without a change in his creed, over the scrupulous piety of a mind so delicate. E 3

of my lovely ward. I am almost convinced that she would perish in those wasting maladies which are apt to arise from vehement disappointed affection, much rather than gratify her heart by a violation of her duty ; yet a woman, a tender, young, and impassioned woman, is, we all know, a frail creature ; and perhaps I ought to take the most determinate steps to secure the gentle being, bequeathed to my care, from a trial so perilous and severe.

I am truly bewildered by the various vexations, perplexities, and dangers on every side. I feel, however, that my mind has gained some little relief in thus copiously unburthening itself to you. I am sure you will be ready to co-operate with me in what I most wish at present, which is, to keep Seymour as quiet as possible ; any precipitate

cipitate importunity in his addresses just now would be very cruel to Cornelia, and must, I think, be ruinous to himself. He appears not a little affected by the sincerity of my zeal for his happiness, and he promises to be guided in a great measure, as to his present conduct, by me; but I perceive the impetuosity of his spirit, and am perfectly aware that it will be very difficult to keep him from acting according to the sudden and accidental impulse of his imperious passion. As you are the only person in the world possessing long and confirmed influence over this impetuous youth, pray let your letters to him be persuasive lessons of tranquillity and patience. By gaining time, we may do much for his good. I should tell you, he has made one generous and important concession;

He has promised, that, if he marries Cornelia, all her children shall be educated as devoutly as she and I may think proper. He will never interfere with the religion of his wife or her family. He even thinks they may be much the happier for being good Christians; yet, so inconsistent are men, they will take no pains to eradicate from their own minds those early habits and prejudices which have hardened them against a faith, whose beneficial influence on the happiness of its true professors they candidly acknowledge.

But, lest you should think I am giving you a sermon without end, my dear Edmund, I will only add, that we return to-morrow to Sedley-hall; and that I propose on the following day to remove the whole party to my house; for which I have an excellent
plea,

plan in the visit I expect from my dear Harriet's lively niece, Louisa Mountbatten, who is coming to pass a month with us, and coming, as she says in a saucy note that I found front her here, with a resolution to rob the lovely widow of her wounded knight, and make a conquest of the gallant Seymour for herself. Whether she succeeds or not, you will be informed in due time. Accept my benediction on yourself and Lucy; and believe me ever

Your affectionate brother,

L E T T E R
XII.

Dear Lucia, — I am sorry to tell you that your mother has not got well again. She has had a bad cold, which has been followed by a violent attack of rheumatism, and has been unable to get up for several days past. I have been writing to you every day, but have not yet been able to get a reply. I hope you will be soon well again, and that you will be able to come to see us before long. I send you my love to all your family, and hope you will be soon well again.

LETTER V.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

BEHOLD me, dear Edmund, restored to Sedley-hall ; and my good genius himself seemed to hail my return, in the shape of a servant, who informed me, as your brother and I alighted at the door, that Dr. Ayton is gone to London. I could not help exclaiming, in the words of Macbeth,

“ Being gone, I am myself again.”

In sober truth, I greatly dreaded a second meeting with this stiff piece of orthodox austerity. I neither chose to play the servile penitent, or the hypocrite, with him ; nor to let him play the insolent school-master and tyrannical

nical bigot with me. I thank my stars, that the tidings of a tottering mitre have hurried him to the metropolis, that he may watch it as the witch does the drop on the corner of the moon, and "catch it ere it fall to ground."

My dear indulgent Cornelia has received me with that graceful gentleness which is so peculiar to herself; and she made so kind a reply to my repeated apology for my late transgression, that, as I told her, I felt the various pains that I have suffered from my folly delightfully repaid in the sweetness of her pardon. There is indeed a delicacy in the manners of Cornelia, which I never found in those of any other woman, and which is the result of her genuine, unaffected, and temperate sensibility. The whole

sex, may, I think, be comprehended in two classes, the lively and the serious; the first often overwhelm us by their vivacity, and the second by their gloom. But Cornelia is a perfect model of the true happy medium. Her gaiety is as mild and benignant as the smile of an angel; and her melancholy, instead of diffusing sadness, inspires only tenderness and love. Such she has appeared to me on the many, many reflections which I have made in various humours on this incomparable woman; yet I must add with sorrow, that although her first reception of me was enchantingly gracious, and perfectly like herself, in some moments since my return I have thought I perceived a new character creeping like a mist over her mind. Her native ease has now and then changed into a cold and

and stately politeness, that struck like a falling icicle on my bosom, and seemed both to lacerate and to petrify my heart. I could not help whispering to her, though there was company in the room " If you treat me with an air of proud indifference, you will very soon make a madman of me for life." I believe she was both vexed and pleased by this intimation ; it had certainly a happy influence on her behaviour and my feelings ; for she never spoke to me afterwards but with such a softness of voice that the tones of it sunk into my soul. Oh, Edmund, this dear delicious woman must be mine, or my life will not be worth preserving !

What has passed in our short absence I have not yet learned ; as I have only had a few encouraging looks from my very good friend Mrs. Audley, and a

brief exhortation from her not to be precipitate, but resign myself to Hope and Heaven. She is an indulgent kind creature; and she has been, I understand, very warm in my defence, at the hazard of incurring her righteous father's displeasure. Yet, much as she is my friend, I cannot depend on her imparting to me explicitly all that I want to know. But I have one sure channel of intelligence. As soon as I can get my grateful Caroline alone, I am confident that her gratitude will induce her to reveal to me all the secrets of the female cabinet, to which I know she is admitted. It is fortunate for me, that she and her happy Monson are to return with us and the ladies to your brother's. He has kindly insisted on carrying us all to his own hospitable mansion to-morrow, where

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he expects to find a niece of Mrs. Audley's, from Ireland, a lovely girl, they say, and wonderfully like Cornelia in form and the shape of her features, but not so in the expression of her countenance, since vivacity is the characteristic of one, and tenderness of the other. Mrs. Audley has been jesting with me, concerning the beauties of her niece, and a design, which she sportively ascribes to her, of making a conquest of me. By Heaven, I thought that Cornelia, who overheard part of our discourse without our intending it, turned pale at the sound! O Venus! if this soft creature should really love me well enough to grow seriously jealous of a young Irish hoyden! if she does, I defy the devil himself, and a legion of his love-thwarting priests, to keep us asunder. But I must bid you

you very hastily adieu. Indeed I should not have written till we are all comfortably settled for a few weeks at Audley grove, had I not thought you would be particularly anxious for an account of my reception from the dear offended hostess of this mansion. I was eager also to inform you of the seasonable departure of the odious high-priest, and the prospect, or rather the glimpse I have, of new and exquisite delight, under the friendly roof of your brother. Among all the joys of an enraptured heart there can be none superior to that of raising a sweet impassioned woman, whose fond imagination has plunged her in the torments of jealous terror, to the paradise of tranquil and confident affection. Farewell; and fail not to wish that the joy

joy which I anticipate in my fancy
may soon be actually possessed by

Your very faithful, and affectionate

SEYMOUR,

and with all my heart I hope

I now —————— you will be

all be well and of good health

LETTER VI.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY,

YOUR good-natured heart, my dear Lucy, will rejoice in being told that our cloudy prospect is grown wonderfully clearer; an unexpected incident has happened, which contributes not a little to our general ease and comfort, though I am almost ashamed to speak of it, even to you, as a source of satisfaction; for the incident I mean

is the sudden departure of my father, who has been hastily summoned, by private business, to London. I trust that I revere him as much as I ought to do, and I am sure I do full justice to the goodness of his intentions ; yet, to own the truth to you, no tender Miss, watching for an opportunity to receive a lover in private, ever heard the departing wheels of her father's carriage with more heart-felt satisfaction than I did. I had terrified myself with the idea, that, by being *righteous* over much, he would ruin, not only the happiness, but the health of our poor Cornelia ; who, if it is necessary at last (which Heaven forbid !) that her infantine heart should be weaned from its idol, must be treated, during that cruel operation, with a gentleness and indulgence, not very compatible with the

the inflexible and imperious integrity
of my father. But he is gone, and
without a prospect of returning hither;
for which I believe you also, my good
girl, will be wicked enough to exclaim,
“Heaven be praised!” — I have still
greater news for you. The bewitching
offender is returned, and received, and
forgiven; whether my good man has
brought him back to us exactly what
we wish, I cannot inform you, as we
have had no time for private conver-
sation, and I write in great haste, to tell
you we are all preparing to decamp.
My niece Louisa is by this time at
Audley Grove; and our whole party
is to adjourn to our house, for the bet-
ter reception of this charming spright-
ly girl, who has at length obtained the
permission of her father to pass a few
months with us. She is determined,

she says, to set her cap at your gallant and princely Seymour. Do you not tremble for poor Cornelia? Alas! what hypocrites we weak women would be, if we could, to one another, and to ourselves! Would you believe that our candid friend, on my jesting with her a few minutes ago about Louisa and Seymour, had the hypocrisy to say, she wished it might be a match! On my answering her only with a keen glance of penetration and reproof, she burst into tears, and said, with her native ingenuous tenderness, "*I strive to wish it; but I cannot.*"

Here she comes again into my room, I suppose with some anxious enquiry concerning this formidable Louisa; but of this, and all other interesting matters, I will write to you very soon after my return; at present I can only add,

add, that Cornelia desires to be most kindly remembered to you; and that I am, with much better hopes than when I closed my last pacquet,

Your affectionate sister

HARRIOT AUDLEY.

LETTER VII.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

YOUR letters, my dear Seymour, have acted as medicine upon my spirits, in the course of an illness into which I have relapsed, and from which I am once more recovered. Sometimes indeed the medicine was too strong for the patient; and at one period my anxiety for you, and my

return of Dr. Ayton, considerably increased the nervous fever, which has proved such an obstinate enemy to my health and comfort. But the high priest's most seasonable departure, and the very cordial regard which I am now doubly assured my brother has conceived for you, inspire me with salutary and enlivening hopes. I clearly perceive that the capricious Goddess Good-fortune is hastening to embrace you, and complete your happiness. Do not, I conjure you, in your impetuous eagerness to meet her, beat the fair Divinity backwards, and overset all her intended bounty.

You find me, as usual, still ready to lead you with cautionary counsel; and, in truth, my dearest friend, I never knew any period in your eventful life, where I saw greater reason, or

felt a more anxious desire, to throw a gentle curb over the native precipitancy of your spirit. Indeed, in proportion as you have advanced in that path which is to lead you, I trust, to happiness, I have felt more and more sanguineous; lest one hasty false step should prevent your reaching the object of your ambition. You are now happily advanced so far, that if you will but trust patiently to Time, he will complete your wishes; and believe me, however nonsensically it may sound to you both in expression and sentiment, to stand still is your surest way to get forward. You have gained the heart of the woman you love; you have gained the friendship of the man whose situation, and, allow me to say, whose virtues give him a fair title to influence her conduct; but, justly regarded

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as you are by both, they are both very full of certain apprehensions concerning you; if, by any rash and passionate attempts to accelerate the event for which you are so eager, you increase and exasperate these apprehensions, the consequence must be universal wretchedness to us all; but if, on the other hand, you act with the generous forbearance that I am now ardently recommending to you, their fears will gradually evaporate; you will appear to them the disinterested, affectionate, and generous being which you really are; your success must be inevitable, since you have no rivals to apprehend; and in thus securing your own happiness, you will make us all happy.

I could wish that my good brother had been successful in his very zealous endeavours for your conversion. Since

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it is otherwise; allow me to suggest to your reflection how far it may be consistent, I will not say with prudence, for I know you despise that cold-blooded quality; but with love, honour, and generosity, to assume an appearance of that creed which your mistress and your friend have so affectionately wished to impress upon your mind. It is needless, I trust, to assure you, that I have an abhorrence as vehement as your own for all the arts of a sordid and selfish hypocrisy. But when dissimulation is practised for no purpose but to ensure the tranquillity and happiness of those we love, it ought surely to lose the name and character of baseness; and to be ranked among the noblest of virtues; it is then that we may speak of falsehood in earnest, and of the truth in the

the spirited language of Tasso, and justly say,

"Magnanima mehlogia! or quidde è
se tu il vero? — — — — — — — — — —
Si bello, che si possa a te preporre!"

"Magnanimus falshood! when is truth
so beautiful as to merit the preference
to thee?"

I quote an Italian poet, to show you
that I have not utterly neglected your
injunction concerning that language; &
though I reproach myself for not having
learned it, as I ought to have
done, in the happier days of Giuliana.

Wert I in your situation, I should
find a marvellous delight in cherishing
such an affectionate illusion in the mind
of my mistress. I should exult in per-
suading her that she had made me every
thing she wished; how charming must

haste, to gratify the fond pride of her soul, in making her believe that by the tenderness which ministered to your earthly pleasure she was literally leading you to Heaven ! How exquisite must the soft features of your Cornelius appear, when animated with the ravingled fire of triumphant piety and gratified affection ! Trust me, my dear Seymour; those happy rogues (whether hypocrites or not) have had the keenest enjoyment of women, who have had the art to mix Devotion with Love ! I cannot say I have great hopes of your regarding my suggestions to you on this subject ; for I know you have such a romantic attachment to truth, that you would rather make yourself miserable for life, by adhering to it, than condescend to be usefully and even generously deceived. What a pity it is

is that the most obstinate votaries are those of imaginary virtue.

I can easily conceive how you would exult in raising a little jealous apprehension in the soft bosom of Cornelia: but have a care, my good friend; do not, by attempting to waken jealousy in one tender heart, inadvertently throw an amorous flame into another. You are too dangerous a fellow to trifle with an artless and glowing girl of eighteen. Though Louisa Mount-maurice, from the peculiar sprightliness of her character, might be more able to defend her heart against your insinuating attractions than the melting Cornelia; yet pray remember that this niece of your good friend Harriet is composed, like the rest of her sex, of combustible atoms; and do not suffer your Cupid to shake his

his torch too near her. As to the advantages you seem to expect from making Cornelia jealous, I have many doubts on that article : doubt, you know, is the characteristic of my mind, and decision of yours. I think much evil might arise from it, and a consequence directly opposite to what your quick fancy has suggested. But I will not pester you with all my thorny conjectures on a contingency that will hardly happen. I must, however, inform you what your very zealous friend Lucy says on your idea ; she entreats you, whatever degree of pleasure or influence you may expect to derive from it, never to pursue so barbarous an expedient. She says, what I am convinced is strictly true, that your fair-one's heart is already as entirely yours as Love can make it ; and why should

Should you cruelly fill it with agonies that cannot increase its affection? Lucy goes so far as to affirm, that your tender widow has not strength of mind or body sufficient to support the pangs of the most excruciating passion; and if you make her really jealous in the present perplexed state of her spirits, you must inevitably destroy either her life or her senses. Though I do not quite subscribe to this fearful idea of my sister's, I cannot help joining her in conjuring you to be cautious. Be assured, my dearest friend, that if you will be but temperate and patient, if you will only allow sufficient time for that Love which is certainly the predominant passion of her soul to subdue and expell the terror that yet adheres to it, you will soon make her your wife upon the terms that are most

most agreeable to your own manly spirit. I am apprised of the generous proposals which you have made to my brother, concerning the education of her children; and, trust me, both your queen and her honest privy-counsellor will (if you do not perplex them with your precipitancy) acquiesce in this definable union, on the ground you propose. But their acquiescence must be the work of deliberation and of time. I will now release you from this tedious lecture; but let me once more repeat our entreaty, for I speak both in Lucy's name and my own, that you will not make yourself wretched by too great an eagerness to be happy. Patronize the prolixity of your timid, affectionate preceptor; and believe me ever sincerely yours.

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LETTER VIII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

I AM sorry you have been so alarmed for the dear bachelor; and give you both joy and praise, my good girl, for having nursed him once more into his usual saucy health. Behold us all happily arrived at Audley-Grove, where the gay Louisa was ready and delighted to receive us. She is wonderfully improved, since we saw her last, in stature, beauty, and sense—but more of her in her turn; I have a thousand things to talk of first. I shall not waste my paper in telling you what a fine numerous cavalcade we formed, in returning hither, nor what a graceful figure our lovely widow made on her

her beautiful Portugueze palfrey. No, my dear, not a word of all this. I must begin, like a true mother, by talking of my chits, and telling you, that your little namesake, and Charles, and William, are all highly pleased, as we are, with the Monsoms, our new governor and governess, who came hither in our party, and are very soon to be settled in the white farm-house lately inclosed within the park, where the little folks under their care are to reside. But methinks I hear you cry, Pish! why does she begin talking to me of the brats, who are all well, when I am dying to hear of the poor Cornelia, who is "perplexed in the extreme?"

Would I could say that our gentle friend enjoys, as our associated children do (for her little ones are here),

"The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light!"

But, alas ! I perceive too clearly, that her tender bosom is becoming the victim of "the fury-passions." I may with too much propriety speak of them in the plural number ; for, by a little incident which I will tell you presently, you will find that she is tormented by more than one ; and that Jealousy has added new stings to discontented and self-tormenting Love. I see, my dear Lucy, that you begin to form a hundred surmises, and want to ask me a hundred questions. What ! (I hear you exclaim) is the romantic Seymour so fickle ? Is he really captivated by the girlish bloom of Louisa ? Patience, my good girl ; it is not fair, when you get a new play in your hand,

to

to peep at the last act before you have well finished the first. Allow me to proceed in my own way, and I will soon make you better acquainted with all the characters and conduct of our busy drama : which is to end, I hope, according to the good old established custom, with a happy marriage.— First then for our heroine, our dear Cornelia : there is an air of deep dejection fixing itself on her features (in spite of all our attempts to disperse it) which alarms me much. She is even melancholy in the presence of Seymour ; and much more so when he is out of her sight : yet she has such a dread of passing a few minutes alone with him, that she conjures me to watch over her incessantly, and never allow him an opportunity of speaking to her in private. But my good man,

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though he has not made him a convert, as I most devoutly hoped he would, has yet made him so tractable, and so willing to bestow a religious education on the children that Cornelia has, and may have; that I am in great hopes their desirable union may, in due time, be happily accomplished, in spite of the dear rash creature's too righteous vow on the fatal night that I described to you. This cruel vow presses like an engine of torture on her heart. She frequently says to me, that their marriage must never take place; but she says this with such a voice, and such a countenance, as convince me that, if it does not, her health and peace are utterly ruined for ever. I have not mentioned a word of this distressing vow to Seymour; and indeed I would not have him know

know of it for the world, especially just now, when I have brought his turbulent spirits to a most comfortable calm. I flatter myself that I am his favourite confidant; and, by telling him no more than literal truth on the various little proofs of Cornelia's entire affection for him, I have brought him to make me a promise very essential to our present tranquillity; and this is, not to address a syllable concerning marriage to her, till the year of her widowhood is expired. In the mean time, it will be the great object of us all to calm her agitated spirits by every thing that can divert and amuse her. I was in great hopes that my lively niece Louisa might be of great use to us in this friendly purpose! but, alas! how frequently does pain flow from those sources whence we expect only

pleasure! Now, Lucy, you shall have the incident I promised; but first I must give you a little description of the charming girl, whom you have not seen since she was a mere child. Though she was always a beautiful child, she has now, I think, still more beauty than her infancy promised, and will, I presume, be reckoned much handsomer than our admired Cornelia herself, by all men who prefer a lively countenance to a tender one. They are exactly of the same height; and Louisa, with the elegant shape of our friend, has a smiling set of features, that seem to say there is no such thing as sorrow in the world. Happily, indeed, it has hitherto been as much a stranger to her as if it did not exist; and as to the solicitudes of Love, you will guess what experience she has of them,

them, when I tell you she has yet found them only fit subjects for laughter.

I never see our tender widow and this sprightly girl together, but I have the two following lines of Shakspere at the end of my tongue ; though I must confess my application of them appears rather cruel,

“ Why let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungall'd may play.”

To play, indeed, from morning to night seems the ruling propensity of Louisa. Besides singing sprightly songs with great humour and pleasantry, this laughter-loving gypsy is a most admirable mimic. She half-delighted and half-provoked me and Caroline yesterday, by taking off what she calls the impassioned languor of the widow

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and the solemn sympathy of Seymour; she is, however, much too delicate and well-bred to attempt any thing of this kind in the presence of Cornelia; but when my husband and Seymour have got the saucy arch girl to themselves, she does not spare the inamorato, as I learn from a scene that passed yesterday in the garden, and produced a very singular effect within-doors, tho' at the moment it escaped my observation.

It happened that I and Caroline (I cannot yet familiarize myself to the formal sound of Mrs. Monson) were standing to chat with Cornelia at her toilet. The windows of her dressing-room, you know, have a perfect command of the new terrace where Louisa, I find, was sauntering, in one of her gayest moods, between the two gentlemen,

sternets. As I chanced to turn my back to the window, I had not perceived the party in the garden; and had indeed my eyes and attention fully engaged by the features and dress of our lovely friend; who, between ourselves, appears to me a little more curious in setting her cap than she used to be before the arrival of my niece. She had borrowed Caroline's assistance to adjust some feathers after the Spanish fashion; and, while they were both thus engaged, I was suddenly alarmed by seeing Cornelia turn as pale as death; a cold trembling seized her whole frame; and all the loveliness of her sweet countenance was lost in a strange expression of desponding wretchedness, or rather of lifeless vacancy. Not suspecting the real source of her disorder, and apprehensive that she was on the point

point of falling into a fainting fit from mere weakness of body, I led her to the sofa, and was very busy with my bottle of hartshorn. The moment I had placed her in a posture of ease and quiet, she was relieved by a violent burst of tears; and pressing my hand, she said, in a broken voice, "Be not so terrified, my dear Harriot: I have no malady to struggle with, but my own folly; and I shall subdue that presently, if you and Caroline will have the goodness to leave me for a few minutes alone." Unwilling as I was to quit her, I did not hesitate to comply with her request, because I perceived, by the looks of Caroline, that she had some thoughts on the occasion that she wished to communicate in private. We accordingly withdrew together; and the moment we got into my room,

"For Heaven's sake, my dear Caroline, said I, can you account for all this?" "Oh, Madam, replied the warm-hearted and grateful Caroline, she must, indeed she must, be the wife of Mr. Seymour; pray do not let Mr. Audley oppose it; I would venture my life on their being happy together. Though Mr. Seymour is not quite so devout as he should be, yet he has a thousand noble virtues; and she loves him to distraction." "I think with you entirely, my dear Caroline, I replied; but this is no answer to my question: I thought by your manner that you had discovered the immediate cause of my poor friend's agitation." "Discovered it! cried Caroline. Ah, Madam, you would have seen it plain enough, if you had cast an eye towards the window at the moment

said that Mrs. Sedley and I happened to do so. Poor lady ! she is far gone indeed ; but, I believe, in her case I should have been affected as much." "Affected at what ? Dear Caroline, don't torture my curiosity so barbarously. For heaven's sake, what did you see ?" "Nothing, madam, but an idle frolic of Mr. Seymour with Miss Louisa. She had provoked him, I suppose, by mimicking the poor lady who doats on him : how that might be I can't tell ; but just as Mrs. Sedley turned so sick, I happened to spy Mr. Seymour catching hold of Miss Louisa, who had tried to run from him, and kissing her most unmercifully." "Poor Cornelie ! I exclaimed with a sigh, can a sight like this affect thee so woefully ? Well, my good Caroline, I continued, pray do not mention a syllable of this idle affair

fair to any creature except your husband. I will instantly return to my poor friend; and see if she has honesty, or rather strength enough, to avow to me of her own accord the real cause of her suffering." I found Cornelia greatly recovered, yet so anxious to evade all discourse that might lead to an explanation of what had passed, that, from a sincere desire not to distress her tender spirits, I sacrificed my design of leading her to a full confession. Yet, to shew you what an uncommon degree of amiable ingenuousness reigns in the heart of this admirable creature, I must tell you how she behaved to me on our retiring at night: she took me to her own chamber, and sending away her servant, began to apologize for her reserve towards me before dinner. "I feel that I am guilty of ingratitude,
my

my dear Harriot, said this tenderness of friends, in attempting to conceal any excesses of my folly from you, whose indulgence, and whose zeal to comfort me, have ever kept pace with my hapless propensity to torment myself. To-day, indeed, I was ashamed to confess my extreme weakness to you in the moment; perhaps our gentle Caroline, who perceived it all, though she was too delicate to utter a syllable before me that proved her conscious of my folly, perhaps Caroline has explained to you all the mystery of my foolish agitation. Ah! my too indulgent Harriot, to what an extravagant and silly pitch of fondness have you raised my dangerous partiality for a man to whom I must never be united! My reason tells me sufficiently that I have no right to be jealous of him; yet I
can-

cannot behold him caressing even your niece Louisa, in a romping frolic, without such wretched and unjustifiable sensations as I am ready to detest, and despise my own heart for feeling. I did not think that any human bosom could be so very weak and unjust; and much less did I suspect myself to be capable of the extreme weakness and injustice which I am now deplored; but, since it is so, my dear Harriot, pray contrive for me to make a decent retreat to-morrow to my own quiet mansion; and, instead of encouraging"——

I heard the tender soul with the most patient silence thus far; but here I could not refrain from entering into a very warm opposition, both to her sentiments and her project of retiring from our party. We had a curious dissertation

tortion on the passion of jealousy, in which I affirmed, that a woman never feels it so painfully, as when she fancies she has no right to feel it at all. We ran over all the old and new ground of argument for and against Seymour; in short, we spent half the night in a very diversified conversation, during which I laughed and wept, and scolded and soothed our dear self-torturing friend alternately, till at last I left her a little reconciled both to herself and her lover. In wishing her a good night I added a saucy declaration, that I should act as queen in my own castle; that if she talked again of removing, I should issue an order for her close confinement; and publish an edict at the same time, in which Seymour should be threatened with instant death if he was seen to touch any lips but her own.

Thus,

Thus, my dear Lucy, by a mixture of seriousness and sport, I endeavour to preserve the mind of our gentle friend from pursuing any immediate and desperate resolution that might prove fatal to her future peace. Would to Heaven I could as easily remove Seymour's distressing infidelity in religion as I can annihilate the vehement resolves which poor Cornelia will sometimes utter of renouncing his society for ever! My husband encourages me to hope that time may do much in promoting the happiness of this interesting couple, if we can but prevent the eagerness of Love on one side, and of Fear on the other, from taking any precipitate measures to accelerate or preclude their union. He wishes to keep them for a few months in an absolute neutrality. But this is a project which even his

friendly zeal, and his persuasive address, will hardly be able to accomplish. We cannot utterly change the dispositions of Nature. Love, in a bosom like Seymour's, will be impetuous; and Terror, in a frame like Cornelia's, will be precipitate. For my part, I should not be surprized if our dear conscientious friend should be terrified still more than she is, by a vision of the poor departed Sedley, and should steal away from us in the night. The conflict of the various passions that agitate her mind is truly pitiable, and at the very moment when I attempt to relieve her by laughing at her perplexities, my heart inwardly bleeds for the anguish of hers. Yet perhaps she says truly, my dear Lucy, that you, from the peculiar incidents of your past life, are more able to enter

into her present feelings than I am. From this idea she will have great satisfaction in unburthening her full soul to you; and as you will certainly have a letter from her very soon, you will the more readily allow me to close this long pacquet. Pray tell our dear Edmund that we think a change of air would have secured him from a relapse, and that we wish him to take that precaution against a second. Cannot you make it suit you both to come to us at this critical time; when the sage Edmund might prove a very useful Mentor to our young Telemachus, not in driving him away from the enjoyments of Love, but in teaching him how to secure them? If, however, we must not expect the pleasure of adding you to our party, as I fear we must not; be assured that I shall send you

quick tidings of every interesting occurrence relative to the great object of our general solicitude. Louisa longs to renew her acquaintance with you, and unites her kind wishes to those of

Your affectionate

HARRIOR.

LETTER IX.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

If you wish, my dear Edmund, to be pleasantly laughed out of all the singularities belonging to the condition of a confirmed bachelor, aye, and out of the condition itself, let me advise you to hasten hither. Here have we a pretty madcap from Ireland, whose

magical

magical powers are strong enough, I believe, to metamorphose the stiffest advocate for a single life into the supplest of all supple creatures, an uxorious and contented husband.' In serious truth, our young Louisa is a most lovely girl, and playful as the air which sports with every feather that flies across it. How it would delight me to see our dear discreet Edmund most profoundly in love with this sweet sportive damsel! By Heaven, she has all the vivacity and frolic of your Sylvia, with good-nature and innocence into the bargain. She is the richest antidote that Nature can furnish you with against those poisonous vapours of spleen and timidity which you sometimes feel and lament, and which seldom fail, I believe, to infest the single in the latter stages of life. She is the

very thing for you; perfectly qualified, though a child of Nature, to relish your wit, and to repay you for it, by a lighter and more copious coin of her own. Why, man, she would destroy all your troublesome doubts, scruples, and depressions, as St. Patrick destroyed the rats of her country, by chyming them to death. She will spout you verses like a young priestess of Apollo; yet the lovely creature has not an atom of pedantry or affectation about her; she has, however, the dangerous diverting talent of minickity to perfection. If my love to Cornelia had not been thoroughly rooted in my heart, I believe this gay gypsey would have beat it out of my bosom, by the mere force of her wit and humour. She took me off, the other day, as we were strolling, with only your brother,

ther, in the garden, with such provoking powers of ridicule, that, having little to say in my defence, I was forced to take vengeance on her lips. I believe she will not speedily renew the provocation; for, seizing her with all my force, I not only kissed her without mercy, but refused to release her till she, in her turn, bestowed a few kisses on me; and the warm luxuriant creature

"Did it with a pudency so easily,
the sweet view don't
Might well have warn'd old Satura."

"These are dangerous frolics, Seymour, very dangerous indeed." This, I know, will be the exclamation of my dear timid monitor in perusing this little anecdote; and dangerous, I grant you, my good man of caution, such a frolic might be, had your serious worship been in my place. Had

your solidity ventured so near as I did to this flaming beauty, I am confident she would have set you in a blaze; but I bear a charmed heart. The image of my lovely widow is so magically engraved there, that no other enchantress has power to affect it. As to that danger which you, in the friendly abundance of your fears, have apprehended for the damsel herself, believe me, she is perfectly secure. Louisa is one of those happy girls whose sense and spirit enable them to jest, and even to romp, without endangering the freedom of their affections, and the delicacy of their character; or, as you will say of her when you are as much in love with this lively charmer as I wish you to be, she is a Venus, who can sport with Morus, without forgetting that she is the Queen of the Graces.

Graces. And now, though you have not seen her, I understand, since she was an infant, I shall deem you a very barbarous fellow if you do not instantly fall in love with her upon my suggestion; especially as I have actually opened the campaign as your aid-de-camp, and have laid strong siege to her heart in your name: I may venture to add, that I have made considerable advances in this exploit; so, pray, hear what they are. First, I have made her intimately acquainted with all your virtues, talents, and perfections; but this is the least important part of my service; my capital stroke in your favour is the following. Secondly, I have made her equally acquainted with your oddities and foibles. A pretty method (you will say) of serving a friend. But hear me out, Edmund. In making her

her thus intimately acquainted with your oddities and foibles, I have shewn her, at the same time, how exactly suited her own charms and accomplishments are to correct, improve, and make you a perfect creature. This I have done for you, my dear diffident philosopher; and I defy you, after all your profound meditations on the virtues and caprices of the fair sex, to point out to me any conduct by which I could more effectually create for you a tender interest in the bosom of the lady. Though you are often a champion for the fair, I believe in your private thoughts you do not think so highly of women as I do. For my own part, I am persuaded that a young, artless, sensible, inexperienced woman, is generally actuated by a sincere and ardent desire to make her own tender virtues

virtues of real utility to the world. This, by the way, will explain the reason why so many of this description have married in the hope of reforming a rake. It is not, as the vulgar phrase will have it, that women love to see a spice of the devil in man, or that they have a vain confidence in their own personal attractions; no, it is because nothing is so bewitching to a virtuous mind without experience, as the expectation of rendering its own virtue an instrument of good.

But what a sad pedantic varlet am I growing, to run on in this fine moral dissertation upon you and your laughing Louisa (for she must be yours), without bestowing a syllable on my pale, pensive, perplexed, yet adorable and faithfully adored Cornelia! But here comes my youngest female monitor,
my

my little Mentor in petticoats, the grateful Caroline ; who has just entered my room to fulfill her promise of indulging me in a long private conference, in which I have a million of questions to ask. By the arch smile on her countenance she has some pleasant tidings to give me, concerning my idol ; but, as she tells me the courier of the house is waiting for this letter, I must reserve her good news to enliven my next. At present you have food enough for your imagination and your heart, in what I have said of Louisa.—So good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both !

Ever your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

L E T-

LETTER X.

FROM CORNELIA TO LUCY AUDLEY.

IT is from you alone, my dear Lucy, that I can expect perfect sympathy and compassion for the various agitations of heart and mind which I continually endure. Though our excellent Harriot has certainly one of the tenderest hearts in the world, and is all kindness to me; yet having known, in her own happy lot, nothing but the felicity of a most fortunate affection, she cannot thoroughly enter into all the diversified wretchedness arising from a passion that we can neither renounce nor subdue. You, my dear girl, have passed through the fiery ordeal, which is now consuming my peace;

peace, and perhaps some portion of my integrity; for I fear I am acting very wrong, in spite of all that our too indulgent Harriot alledges in my defence, to remain here in the society of a fascinating creature, from whom I ought, I think, both for his sake and my own, to hide myself for ever. But I will unburthen my full bosom to you, my dear Lucy, and lay my whole soul before you, in the hope that your experience, as well as your tenderness, may minister in some degree to my relief.

You have known, my good girl, what it is to love in spite of reason, and without a hope of being united to the object of your regard. Ah, my dear Lucy, how sincerely do I admire that nobleness of spirit with which you have finally triumphed over feelings
that

that seem to annihilate the best faculties of the mind! But your candour will allow that you had one great advantage, which I am very far from possessing; in discovering the baseness of the man who had artfully engaged your affections, you had an opportunity of summoning your pride to your support:

"Your bane and antidote were both before you."

But, alas, the case is far otherwise with me! "The gallant, the princely Seymour," to give him the titles conferred on him by yourself, has, I find, no qualities (as you have often told me when arguing in his favour) "to awaken either contempt or indifference; and to love him once is to love him for ever." How often, my dear friend,

has

has that forcible expression of yours recurred upon my heart! and how many wonderful occurrences, since you and I parted, have conspired to make me feel the truth of it as I do at this moment; but, while I am thoroughly convinced that my affection for him is become a part of my existence, I feel with equal conviction the cruel necessity of rejecting him as a husband. Why am I here then in his company? Why do I linger thus, like a guilty ghost, in a scene that I ought and wish to abandon? Ah, my dear Lucy, if you could see how pale and thin your poor Cornelia is grown, you would not think the word *ghost* misapplied; and that I am in some degree guilty, my conscience tells me every hour; for, by staying here, I seem to practise an ungenerous deceit towards Seymour,

and

and may lead him perhaps to cherish a distant hope of accomplishing what never must come to pass. Why, then, do I stay? Why, truly, because your good brother and sister will have it so. They would persuade me, that time may do wonders in removing the great and only obstacle to this much-desired, yet impossible union. Your brother, this very morning, refused to hear a petition that I attempted to make to him, for leave to depart; and turned from me, with the following parody on a couplet of Gray's:

“Love yet may make an unbeliever wise,
And gospel-light dawn from Cornelia's
eyes.”

Ah, my dear Lucy, I will confess to you there are times when this transporting idea takes full possession of my soul. When I fondly imagine myself

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destined by Heaven to rescue the generous Seymour from the vain illusions and arrogant sophistry of the world, and to make him a true servant of that Divine Master whose laws are so consonant to the purity and the benevolence of his heart, how exquisite is the delight of this heavenly idea! With what enthusiastic transport have I frequently in my own mind applied to Seymour and myself the following charming lines from the Royal Convert of Rowe :

“ My Life ! my Lord !
What would my heart say to thee ?
Oh, lift thy eyes up to that holy Power
Whose wondrous truths and Majesty di-
vine
Thy Ethelinda taught thee first to know !
There fix thy faith, and triumph o'er the
world ;
For who can help, or who can save be-
sides ? ”

Yet,

Yet, in spite of this holy fortitude and fervor, which seem in some of my private moments to render me a new and more exalted being, I soon relapse again into my poor trembling self. Though I feel, at times, as if I had sufficient powers of language and reasoning to produce a total and immediate change in the religious sentiments of Seymour; and though I love him with so pure and disinterested a passion that I would most willingly sacrifice my life to ensure his conversion; yet such a poor, weak wretch am I, my dear Lucy, by nature, that I dare not even utter a syllable to him on the subject of Religion; and a cold involuntary tremor runs through my whole frame, if the conversation seems to be taking that turn, whenever we are in company together. Still our

dear encouraging Harriot would induce me to hope that the mild engaging piety of her husband, and his conciliating manners, united to the secret influence of Love, may gradually accomplish what I have not faculties to attempt, and give to us at last the happy convert that we so ardently wish to behold. "Why should we despair, says this indulgent friend and most indefatigable of advocates, why should we despair of seeing a candid, a magnanimous young man relinquish the accidental prejudice of his youth? If Seymour were one of those lawless libertines who abhor, in the Gospel, an insupportable curb to their sensual and imperious passions; or if he were one of those cold-hearted and arrogant sophists who deride every thing that does not square with their own infallible reason;

reason ; we might indeed despair of his conversion. But Seymour is a character very different from these. In embracing the law of Christ, he will subject himself to no restraint from which his heart can feel a wish to revolt : on the contrary, he will secure to himself, by this measure, the only object of his passionate attachment."

Ah, my dear Lucy, you, I am sure, will forgive me, for listening sometimes with the fondest credulity to these insinuating arguments. Alas ! how deeply am I punished for that credulity, whenever my own poor wavering mind flies back again, as it frequently does, to the opposite persuasion ! I then think myself the most culpable of creatures. I seem to have deserted my prime duty to my dear children, by suffering myself to be thus

more and more entangled in a connexion, which might ultimately lead me to violate the dying injunction of their father, and expose them to the worst of evils. But no, my dear Lucy, this shall never be. I have taken a most sacred oath, as Harriot has told you, that I will never be the wife of an infidel. Seymour is too noble to delude me with hypocrisy; and whatever destiny may await me, I am secure against this deepest of calamities. Why, then, am I tormented with such a dread and horror of what never can befall me? For, O, my dear friend, I am tormented to a degree that I can hardly impart, without a scruple, to your tender bosom. I know how you will feel for me, when I tell you (what I have not confessed to Harriot) that I am haunted by visions which

almost freeze my blood, and render me an object of detestation to myself. You will suppose I am persecuted in my dreams by the image of the poor departed Sedley : but it is not so ; to my great surprise, I have never dreamt of him in all my present agitation of spirits. No ; my visions are much more horrid, for I have dreamed that my excessive passion for Seymour had annihilated all my natural affection for my children. O God ! my dear Lucy, this is a horror of which you can form no adequate conception. I had hardly closed my eyes last night when I seemed to behold the misery of my alienated children. I heard William shriek out, to the poor little affrighted Charles, “Our mother is turned into a treacherous friend !” Their looks of terror and abhorrence pierced me to the soul.

I strove to convince them of my fondness; the poor bewildered innocents fled from me. I pursued them through innumerable difficulties; till at last I awoke in a burst of convulsive anguish, and found myself actually kneeling and weeping over the little bed in my chamber where the two dear boys were happily asleep. At first I could hardly believe my own happiness, in finding them so tranquil; and I took the light which I always burn in my room, to convince myself of its truth, by a full survey of their sweet little placid features. The contrast of their soft delicious slumber, and the agony which I had dreamed they were suffering, threw me into fresh floods of tears. In retiring to my own pillow, I addressed a most ardent prayer to Heaven, not only to preserve these dear infants from

all

all the evil which my weakness might draw upon them, but to deliver both myself and Seymour from this disquieting passion, which seems so likely to prove a misfortune to both. I am afraid you will think me hardly sincere in this prayer; yet believe me, my dear friend, if I know my own heart and soul, I was so most truly, But to you, my dear Lucy, I shall not hesitate to confess, that the more I struggle to free myself from this fascinating attachment, the more I feel myself the slave of an unfortunate affection, which has so much to plead in its excuse. My reason and my conscience continually suggest to me that I am wrong; and there are times when I feel a sort of hatred towards Seymour, for having led me to a state of mind so full of pain and distress. Even in my private medi-

meditations my heart will often seem to shrink from him, and hold it as a crime even to think of his perfections. But these feelings are transient ; and they are generally followed by such a relapse of tender passions, that I am ready to address the image of this dear enemy to my peace in the words of Ethelinda :

“ If thou art my offence, I’ve finn’d indeed,
Ev’n to a vast and numberless account;
For from the season when I lov’d thee
first
My foul has not one moment been
without thee.”

You, my dear friend, you and Harriot have been cruelly instrumental to my disquietude and distress, by your well-intended, but fatal indulgence to me, at the early period of my attachment ;

ment; when you ridiculed my honest endeavours to conceal and subdue my affection, when you delighted to fan the flame that I was vainly labouring to extinguish. Time and chance have conspired still more cruelly to give this most enchanting of men a dominion over my heart. I have a strange mixture of pain and delight in reflecting on the great obligation that I owe him. He has indeed, as you have often said of him, so many attractive accomplishments and virtues, that it is hardly possible for any woman to see him frequently without feeling an affectionate admiration of his character. Surely no man ever possessed in so high a degree that rare union of tenderness and spirit which is so particularly engaging to our sex, or such admirable delicacy of manners, without a shadow of

of artifice or affectation. O Lucy, I could scribble a volume on the excellence and peculiarity of his attractions; but though his perfections will more than justify, my good girl, your ardent friendship for him, I feel that, great as they are, they cannot afford a sufficient sanction to my love. It is enough that my conscience repeatedly informs me I must not indulge it. Conscience, my good Lucy, is a much safer guide than Friendship herself, however zealous and enlightened; and when we act against the dictates of this internal monitor, even in points that seem hardly material, how deeply are we punished! Alas, I am a sad example how deeply I offended this inflexible judge, when I complied with the pressing solicitations of our dear Harriot in attending her hither. What
I have

I have endured since I came under her friendly roof you may partly guess, from what I have told you already. But, alas ! my dear Lucy, I have not yet told you all my weaknesses or my sufferings. You have probably heard what I allude to from our communicative Harriot, because it was a weakness that I confessed to her, and, confiding in your kindness and secrecy, I lay her under no restraint in what she says of me to you ; yet her tenderness, perhaps, in this point, may have spared me. I will therefore be frank enough to tell you under my own hand, that I have within these few days been the weakest and most unjust of women ; I have been fool enough to grow most absurdly jealous of him whose addresses I had determined to reject. Oh, Lucy, I did not think there

there had been such inconsistency in woman; much less in my own heart. You, I know, will rather pity than ridicule me, when I tell you, that upon accidentally seeing Seymour caressing our young Louisa in a mere frolic, I felt as if my whole frame was shattered on the rack. Of all the sensations that I remember to have endured in my life, this, my dear friend, was the most hideously painful; it seemed as if my heart was absolutely torn away from its seat, and there was nothing but drear vacuity in my bosom. Heaven have mercy upon the jealous, if such are the fortunes they endure! But my pain could not be owing to mere jealousy; it was rather the effect of a sudden surprize, upon nerves that have been dreadfully shaken. I think I could see the same thing again without feeling.

ing any emotion at the sight; yet I will not pretend to more fortitude, or more justice, than I have. You have often very feelingly lamented your own weakness to me, my dear friend; and I am now abundantly returning your confidence. I have a double reason for thus unfolding to you every instance of my folly. First, as a proof of my perfect regard for you. Secondly, because I hope, in thus shewing how thoroughly I am aware of my own infirmity, I may gain credit with you for the strength and wisdom that I mean to recover and exert. I have formed a plan, in my own mind, for my deliverance; upon which I am particularly solicitous to have your opinion, because I think no one can enter into my feelings so thoroughly as yourself. Our dear Harriot, and her
most

most friendly husband, judge me too hardly, or rather too tenderly. From their eager wish to exempt me from pain, they suppose me unable to endure it; they both believe me so incurably enamoured of Seymour, that they think no event but our marriage can preserve my existence; but, weak as I feel and confess myself to be, I have still, I am convinced, a strength of spirit far superior to what they imagine. Our dear and zealous Harriot is so vehement for this impossible marriage, that she wants me to overlook the grand and insuperable objection. She tells me, that I ought to be satisfied by such concessions as Seymour, she says, is very willing to make. That if I have the most unquestionable assurance that all my children shall be religiously educated
in

in the Christian Faith, and my own principles unmolested by opposition, I have no reason to disturb myself concerning the private creed of my husband. But, situated as I am, I feel it is my prime duty to regard the dying injunction of poor Sedley, and to maintain the voluntary oath which I was induced to take from an excess of anxiety for my children. I might indeed confide in any promise of Seymour's; for, stranger as he most unhappily is to the only true Religion, in all other points he is truth itself. If he gave his word to this article, I can believe that he never would urge a single argument, or attempt by ridicule to shake the faith of my children or his own. But, if he did not poison their young minds by his doctrine, might he not mislead them by his insinuating exam-

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ple? Might he not induce even me to grow cold and negligent in the most important duty of life, and to relinquish imperceptibly the worship of my Redeemer? Yes, my dear friend, I will confess to you, that I could not promise for my own firmness, were I to place myself in so perilous a situation; even now I often contemplate the irreligion of the man I love in too favourable a light. I am too ready to say, like Zayre, in my favourite French play,

" Je le vois trop : les soins qu'on prend
de notre enfance

Faillent nos sentiments, nos mœurs, no-
tre créance.

L'instruction fait tout ; & la main de nos
pères

Grave en nos faibles cœurs ces premiers
caractères,

Que

Que l'exemple & le temps nous viennent
retracer,

Et que peut-être en nous Dieu seul peut
effacer."

"I see too plainly custom forms us all;
Our thoughts, our morals, our most fix'd
belief,

Are consequences of our place of birth;
'Tis but instruction all—our parent's
hand

Writes on our heart the first faint cha-
racters,

Which time retracing deepens into
strength,

That nothing can efface but Death or
Heav'n." HILL'S Zara.

By considering his infidelity as the
natural consequence of a fashionable
education, I frequently lose all the
horror with which it ought to inspire
me. I should not be able perhaps to

struggle with this weakness of my heart and mind so effectually as I now hope to do, had not the forcible admonitions of my dear Harriot's father awakened me to the fullest sense of my dangers and my duty. Good daughter as she is, she could hardly forgive him for his vehemence against Seymour, in that distressed night of which she says she gave you a very minute description ; yet he certainly acted only the part that became him, as a friend and a divine. The more I reflect on the many strong and just things he said, the more I feel myself indebted to his virtue, and the more I hope to profit by his advice ; though, as I have already confessed to you, there are times when it has not the slightest influence on my feelings. In my more discreet hours I endeavour to fortify my

my spirit by calling his very powerful lecture to my mind. One of his remarks made a very deep impression upon me. In entering minutely into the character of Seymour, after doing full justice to his courage, his generosity, and his engaging accomplishments, he said, "I will grant you, that he is ~~a~~ most delightful companion for your sex at his present period of life; there is a vivacity and good-nature in youth that can hide all the hideousness of impiety itself; but the main question is, what sort of a husband will this man make towards the middle and latter end of his days, when his gaiety begins to languish, from the emptiness of human pleasures, and his lively temper is rendered more spleenetic and imperious by the inevitable vexations of the world?"

These are the trying seasons of our existence ; and if he is destitute of Religion, as we know but too well he is, believe me he is destitute of every thing that can tranquillize his own spirit at the period I am speaking of, and enable him to diffuse light and comfort to his domestic circle." I have given you, I believe, very near the exact words of my vehement and venerable counsellor ; for, agitated as I was, every syllable that he uttered sunk deep into my soul ; and as there is, you know, a strange spirit of contradiction in our nature, I believe I remember his expressions the more accurately, because the too indulgent Harriot has wished me to forget them : the last time that I recalled some of these to her recollection, she was almost angry with me, and said, in her spirited

spirited manner, that I should realize the story of the poor Lady Clementina, and drive myself quite out of my senses by my religious scruples. But, as I told her in my reply, our cases are widely different; that enchanting character, whether true or ideal, had many circumstances to distract her, from which I am happily exempt: she was persecuted by proud and imperious relations; the little difference between her own creed and that of Grandison was not sufficiently visible and weighty to make her mind clear and resolute in her decision against him. Alas! how different is my case! I distinctly see my own duty; and I trust I am now completely determined to fulfill it. I shall, however, take a hint from the noble Clementina. I am strongly inclined to solicit the well-known generosity

rosity of my lover to support me against himself. This, my dear Lucy, is the plan upon which I am anxious for your opinion. Our dear Harriot has very innocently increased my misery, by her eagerness to relieve it; though I had not power to refuse her pressing entreaties, I am now too painfully convinced, by my own sufferings, that I ought not to have made one of the party here. My peace is fled, and my health is wasting rapidly away. I have no chance of recovering a tolerable degree of quiet, but in a resolute and hasty retreat to my own solitary mansion. I must take, however, my dear boys along with me; for all my force and fortitude originates in them. The Monsoms, I know, will follow me with their other little pupils. In the grateful and sensible Caroline I have a

valu-

valuable bosom-friend, most anxious for my lasting happiness, though confessedly in the interest of her generous protector.

Our dear Harriot thinks me so totally unfit to be my own guide, that I know she would not patiently hear of this project, necessary as I feel it is to my peace. I think, therefore, of accomplishing my departure without her suspecting it. All this I have settled in my own mind, and am much easier since I formed the resolution. But now, my dear sympathetic friend, decide for me the great point that perplexes me: shall I, or shall I not, leave a long letter for Seymour; unfolding most frankly to him all the painful past conflicts in my bosom; and conjuring him, by the sincerity of that disinterested love which he professes,

to

to let me peaceably pursue the only line of conduct that can possibly secure to me the lasting approbation of my host, and the tranquillity of my mind?... I know, if I asked Harriot the question that I have now proposed to you, my dear Lucy, she would wickedly laugh in my face, and tell me, that the ardent imagination of Seymour would consider such an epistle as a delicate hint to pursue me to Sedley-hall. But our sprightly friend does not, I think, perfectly understand either Seymour or me. As to myself, I should assuredly wish to be understood as literally sincere in my request; and I am willing to think that Seymour, with all his impetuous spirit, has too much penetration, and too much delicacy, to put so wrong a construction on the language of a woman, when she candidly reveals

reveals her whole soul to him without a shadow of reserve. But tell me what you think; and tell me speedily, my dear girl. Suppose yourself exactly in my situation, and tell me how you would act: yet you cannot do so completely; your imagination, lively and powerful as it is, cannot perfectly suggest to you all the strong feelings of a mother situated as I am. But how many striking circumstances have it to impress upon my heart all the great duties of that important character! The extreme loveliness of my children, the dying request of my poor Sedley, the admonitions of my own excellent father, who, delighting in the uncommon name that he gave me, used frequently to bid me remember that he gave it me, not because it sounded well, and was singular, but because

because it had belonged to a Roman lady distinguished by the lustre of her maternal virtues, and because he hoped that if Heaven blessed me with children, it might make me as attentive as she was to the care of their education. O you benevolent spirits who were once on earth the kind monitors of your Cornelia, and are now perhaps looking down upon her from Heaven, I will not forget you, and the principles which you infused into my soul! I will banish all love from my bosom, but the love of those dear little ones whom you commended to my care: I will live only for them. Write, and confirm me, my dear Lucy, in this only safe, this triumphant resolution. No words can express the relief that I have found already in thus pouring forth my whole heart to you. You will

will comprehend all its complicated emotions. You will compassionate all its weakness. You will rejoice in its reviving energy. You will applaud my conscientious decision; and your applause will operate as a cordial on the still trembling spirits of

Your most sincere

and affectionate

CORNELIA.

P. S. Alas! what a poor slave am I to Time and Chance! Five minutes ago I was exulting in the close of this immense pacquet, and in the comfort I anticipated from your expected answer; and now I have a great mind to throw all these closely-scribbled sheets into the fire; for, behold, the great question, on which I was so anxious to consult you, is suddenly become no question

question at all; my maid has just told me, that Mr. Seymour is going from us to-morrow. Ah, my dear Lucy, what a weak, what a despicable creature is your poor vaunting Cornelia! Though I had firmly resolved to fly from him myself, I must own to you that I feel mortified to death by his thus retiring from me. Oh, abominable vanity! This is a weakness that deserves no quarter. But I trust it is only the last fluttering momentary flame of an exhausted fire, just on the point of extinction. Write to me—reprove me—comfort me—exhort and command me to struggle and triumph over all my follies; and to maintain that calm dignity of character which you have a peculiar right to recommend, from the force and felicity of your example. Adieu; pray remember

her that I have implicit confidence in your honour, and that I depend on you not shewing even a line of this letter to your brother.

LETTER XI.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

IF I were entrust to any man, my dear Seymour, a commission to chuse a wife for me, it shall certainly be to you; for I know not in the world a man more entitled to the old classical compliment of "*elegans formarum spectator.*" You are indeed an accomplished judge, both of exterior and internal beauty; of the persons and the minds of women; but to chuse a wife is an arduous business, where

where good luck, as well as good sense, is so essentially requisite, that, without doubting your discernment, I may distrust your fortune; and the more so, because, after making one choice for yourself with consummate success (for no woman, in my opinion, can be more suited to you than Cornelia), you cannot reasonably expect a second instance of marvellous felicity in chusing for your friend. Did you ever hear of a lottery in which the two twenty thousands were selected by one person? As to myself, I am, you know, so far from being sanguine in my expectations of all matters depending on chance, that I shall probably pass through the world without once venturing on one of these richly promising matrimonial tickets; yet, believe me, it is not because I think less highly

Highly of the sex than you do; no, indeed, after all that Wit and Satire have written against women and wedlock, I am convinced that life is hardly supportable without some female connexion; and there is certainly no connexion so likely to produce lasting pleasure and comfort as a marriage where Love may be considered as prime minister, under the sovereign authority of Reason. But our lot, as to marriage or celibacy, is generally decided by some little incident that starts up in the early part of life, and hurries us we know not whither. It was my destiny, as you are perfectly apprized, to be strangely entangled in a tender attachment, that I could never entirely approve, that time and experience induce me still more to condemn; and that I yet want the fortitude or the

cruelty (call it which you will) to terminate in the manner that would be most conducive to my quiet, my interest, and my reputation. Man is by nature so subtle a logician in his own defence, that he is hardly ever without a very specious reason for such conduct as his private inclinations impel him to pursue. Thus I impute my celibacy, not solely to my secret bondage under the dominion of the too fond and wayward Sylvia; but to circumstances of a more honourable complexion. My good sister Lucy stands forth as the fair and ostensible motive for my single life. Indeed the bitter disappointment which this excellent girl met with in her matrimonial prospect, made me very desirous of settling her where she might at least enjoy the authority of a wife. She has now pre-

presided over my house so long, has
borne her faculties so meekly, and
been so clear in her great office," that
I am inclined to believe we are hap-
pier in thus mutually supporting our
liberties, than either of us would have
been under matrimonial dominion.

This being the case, you must allow
the confirmed bachelor to remain in
the quiet enjoyment of his various oc-
cupies. I have just passed the period at
which Aristotle says the good citizen
ought to marry; and since I have let
the season slip, I must content myself
with exhorting you to make ample
amends for my omission. Do not,
however, suppose that I mean to throw
a double duty upon you, or advise you
to make love alternately to the virgin
and the widow; which you seem half-
inclined to do. Dangerous frolics

L 2 indeed!

indeed! Pray be a little more constant in your devoirs; and a little more temperate in your revenge.—Heaven preserve your lively Louisa! I hope she will soon be kissed by lips less vindictive than yours, and much younger than those of the half-hoary swain whom your partiality has so unseasonably recommended to be made young again by her

“Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles.”

“Ah, Seymour, you will find perhaps, when you are on the verge of forty, that you are a better judge of such disparity: But if I were younger than I am, I should still dread a comparison with a swain so ardent; I should fancy that even the gay Louisa, though she looked like rosy Mirth when panting under your fiery embrace, might be metamorphosed into

green

green and yellow Melancholy, upon
exchanging that embrace for the more
phlegmatic caresses^t of your friend.
Leave me, therefore, to my singulari-
ties. Let Providence provide for Lou-
isa; and do you confine all your gen-
tle solicitude, all your tender atten-
tion, to the interesting and deeply en-
moured Cornelia: — “For the rest,
Leave all to Heaven—be faithful, and
you will be blest.” — I have now only
to express my good wishes to you in
the words of a play which, Lucy tells
me, is a great favourite with your love-
ly and accomplished fair-one.

Accept our united benedictions; and
believe me ever

Your anxious monitor,

and very and affectionate friend.

It is now nearly time for me to go, so I must be brief. L 3 L E T.

LETTER XII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

In closing my last to you, my dear Edmund, I gave you reason to expect very speedily some gay tidings in favour of my love, that were just announced to me by the arch smile of the good, grateful Caroline. That most sincere and most zealous friend to my passion had indeed some very delicious intelligence to give me; but the excellent creature was so divided and confused, between her ardent desire to serve me, and her dread of betraying her patroness, that I had some difficulty in drawing from her lips what she came on purpose to communicate. At length, however, my faithful minister opened

opened the Budget, and presented to me such a statement of affairs, that my heart bounded in my bosom with happy glad joy. My grand wish is accomplished; my exquisitely tender Corinella is jealous of me to distraction. She happened to spy me from her window, folding Louisa in my arms, and almost fainted at the sight. " If I do not take pity of her, as Benedick says, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew!" I shall not add, in the words of the play, " I will go get her picture;" but I will hasten to get possession of the enchanting original. Shake not thy head, my dear Elmorous monitor; and tell me no more of caution and delay. Shall I keep such endearing sensibility on the rack of her own affectionate doubts and fears! " Aye, but, Seymour; I hear you ex-

claim, remember the great impediment in your way; which only time and patience can enable you to o'erleap." Fear not, my good friend; I am not blind to all the obstacles before me; and have lately discovered one, of which my sagacious monitor himself, perhaps, is not aware. Your kind sister, Harriot, has not dealt quite so frankly with me as she professes to do; but I shall shew her, in my turn, that when I meet with reserve and disguise, I also can make mysteries of my own, and conceal from my intimate friends both what I know and what I intend. After the docility and obedience which I have shewn to her mandates, Harriot ought to have imparted to me a secret that I accidentally got a suspicion of, and at last with great difficulty extorted from the honest bosom of Caroline,

who

who nobly chose rather to break a promise which she had inconsiderately made to Mrs. Audley, than appear bare-faced and ungrateful to me. So the good creature reluctantly confessed to me, that my dear idol has made a hasty and desperate vow, you may guess of what nature. Pray observe that the soft Cornelia can be precipitate as well as her lover. But what are vows, my dear timid preceptor? Do we not know, from the experience of ages, that fond women make them as they make sugar toys with concealed mottoes, chiefly for the pleasure of seeing them broken. I have just formed a glorious and delightful project for demolishing this paste-like but unpalatable vow of my lovely widow. As the sweet creature will swear, I must make her exchange her rough oath,

oath, for one of gender'd form. Be not
terrified at this intimation, my good
child; if you are free from unnecessary apprehensions; I
am not going to play the terrific Jea-
pidor, in all his fire, with this fond
jealous Semele; and reduce the tender
creature to ashes; though she featur'd
by her provoking vow to invite all
my powers. I will not explain to you
what my project is, because I know
there is a tardy caution and timidity
in your nature that would not allow
you to approve it. Rest however as-
sured, that there is nothing dishonour-
able, nothing ungentle, in the scheme.
Trouble not yourself to send me any
wise remonstrances, for if you do I
can only answer them thus,

"Sage! I have set my love upon a calf,
And I will stand the hazard of the dye."

How-

However I may prosper, believe me
ever

Your most affectionate

Selma,

P. S. Pray do not write to this house till you hear from me again; at least on my account. I am departing immediately for London, where I have some short business to dispatch. I am desirous of relieving my tender Cornelia from the torments of jealousy, and of speculating, at the same time, on the effects which my unexpected departure may produce on her heart, before I enter on my grand and at present unutterable project. Adieu! my brain is working with anxiety, like that of an alchemist in the approach of the hour which is to make him either a Croesus or a beggar.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

FROM LUCY AUDLEY TO CORNELIA.

YOU do me justice, my very dear friend, in giving me credit for the most perfect sympathy in all you endure. Indeed, I sympathize with you so entirely, that my sentiments and wishes seem to follow every variation of yours; and the little judgment that Nature gave me is reduced, I fear, to an absolute nothing, by the excesses of my anxiety for your very delicate and distressing situation. I feel at once flattered, delighted, grieved, perplexed, and overwhelmed, by your most friendly and endearing letter; for, to imitate your charming frankness, I must tell you that I feel myself

self utterly unworthy to sustain the part of your adviser and your guide, which, in your kind partiality, you seem to wish me to assume. You pay me a most animating compliment on the triumph that I gained over my own unfortunate and ill-placed affection. But what, my sweet friend, what was my trial, compared to yours? To alienate a fond and simple heart from a man whose base character had been publickly detected, and who clearly deserved general contempt, requires, I own, some painful efforts; but such efforts few women, I believe, would fail to make with success; because, as you justly remark, our Pride in such a conflict affords a very powerful support to our Reason. But to relinquish the most accomplished, the most admired, the most engaging of men;

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man; to relinquish such a being, when you know he doats on you with the most passionate attachment, and when he has awakened all the feelings of reciprocal affection; to relinquish him for one unhappy circumstance, which is rather his misfortune than his fault; to resolve and to persevere in all this, may perhaps be within the power of our angelic Cornelia. I shall be ready to adore you, if you make the sacrifice; but I must confess that the poor mortal Lucy would hardly be able to purchase Heaven itself at such a price. Do not abhor me as an impious creature, my dear devout friend, for this confession. Believe me, though I am a very weak, yet I am still a very sincere Christian; but I am convinced that our feeble brains may think even of Religion too much; and as a poet,

who was very far from wanting pity,
has very happily told us,

"The work of madmen is a sine non numad."

Do not imagine that I think the religious faith of a husband is a matter of little consequence to a wife: on the contrary, in a connexion where unexpected discord is so apt to arise, I think the two minds should be as nearly in unison as possible, upon all the great objects of human contemplation. But where, my dear friend, is such complete unison to be found? Perhaps not upon earth. Marriage would be a rare thing indeed if it were never to be solemnized till such unison could be proved. It is the fashion therefore, in this necessary and universal ceremony, to take a great deal upon trust; and many a good wife, if she sees her

hus-

husband go decently to church, troubles her head very little concerning his private notions either of God or the Devil. Our ladies indeed, in former times, were more piously inquisitive. I have read, I think in Hudibras, of certain devout dames of quality, who tied their husbands to a bed-post, and whipped them too, to render them more godly.

Do not think, my dear gentle friend, that I mean to treat your scruples with a barbarous, unbecoming ridicule ; no, I only mean, though I attempt it but awkwardly, to divert your thoughts from dwelling too seriously and intensely on a subject which, if you suffer it to prey so continually on your spirits, may undermine your health, without promoting any good end whatever. You entreat me to suppose myself exactly in

your situation, and tell you how I should act; you allow, however, that I cannot exactly conceive all your sensations. I am glad you furnish me with such a comfortable excuse for my superior weakness; for I am dreadfully afraid, that in such a trial I should not possess even a moiety of your virtue and resolution; my present partiality, as a mere friend to this fascinating Seymour, convinces me of the turn that my feebler reason would take in his behalf. I should easily persuade myself that a man, whose heart I thought had all the tender benevolence of the Gospel, and whose life, I hoped, would have much of its purity, might be ultimately more favoured by its Divine Author, than many mortals who conceal an antipathy for his laws under a boasted reverence for his name.

romantic fancy would suggest to me, that, if I endangered my own soul by accepting such a lover, I should still more deeply endanger his by refusing him; and, in such an alternative, I need not tell you for which hazard a fond, generous, romantic spirit might decide. But, if I cannot strengthen your resolution, as you expect me to do, by sincerely professing myself equal to such a great sacrifice as you meditate, I certainly ought, in owning my weakness, to own at the same time my apprehensions of its consequence. I am one, I believe, of those very common characters, just foolish and weak enough to act wrong on a very severe trial; and just wise and virtuous enough to feel incessant remorse for having done so. Were I to snare Seymour in your situation, I am

am persuaded I should be wretched if I failed in the hope of leading him by gentle degrees, to my own religious persuasion. To act on a vain confidence in such a hope would be, I acknowledge, to act like a fool. Yet I feel that this folly, fortified as it would be by all the illusive powers of Love, would be infinitely too strong for my feeble reason. I should most probably act ill from good affectionate motives, and be the dupe and victim of my own absurdity. Alas! what a bitter enemy is the tenderest of passions to the sweet cheerful serenity of female life! Yet what different effects does it produce in the different characters of our sex! To the gentle, the artless, the open-hearted, Love is often a deep tragedy: to the notable and discreet, it is a sort of heavy sentimental

comedy: to the perfectly vain and capricious, it is neither better nor worse than an absolute farce. Now, my dearest Cornelia, in my meditation upon Love and You (two ideas most easily united!) I have conceived a wish and a hope that you may disarm the cruelty of this tyrant, by treating him with a little levity, which, though foreign, I confess, to your natural temper, may be salutary and graceful in your present very singular situation. I think you are at present so circumstanced, and your agitated spirits are in such a tender state, that you cannot decide either for or against your lover, without incurring such severe pain as all who have the delight of knowing you must be anxious for your avoiding. But what necessity is there for any immediate decision? Trust me,

there

there is none. Pray let me teach you to play the coquette a little. Tell this precipitate Seymour, that, young and admired as you are, you must take some time to look round the world, and see what multitudes of accomplished men it exhibits, before you deign to bestow your invaluable self on any one of the crew. Tell him, he has not passed through a period of probation half long enough to convince you of his attachment. Dispatch him as your ambassador to our divine Giuliana ; and bid him listen to that heavenly enthusiast for a twelvemonth. Trust me, my dear friend, you may venture to send him round the world, without any danger of his not returning to you with all the loyalty of Love. But you, dear jealous creature, would have a thousand apprehensions.

M 3

O how

O how I love you for the very frank confession in your postscript concerning his unexpected departure ! I should have begun to stand in dreadful awe of you, as an absolute angel, but for that comfortable, endearing confession.— There I see my fellow-creature; there, my dear, you are a true woman ; for we can none of us bear to be deserted, even by the man whom we are resolute to discard. But I can safely assure you, that Seymour is no more able to desert you, than the poor sparrow, whose little leg is fettered, is able to fly away from the half-happy and half-terrified girl, who holds him in her string. Be gentle, be tranquil yourself ; and in time, I am persuaded, you will inspire this wild flatterer with as much patience and docility as you can wish him to possess. That Heaven,

ven, my dear friend, may proportion your happiness, even on earth, to the exquisite tenderness and purity of your heart, is the cordial and ardent prayer of

Your most faithful
and affectionate
Lucy.

L E T T E R XIV.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

PRAY, my good girl, can you send us any comfortable tidings of the run-away Seymour? To my utter astonishment, we are all in a state of dismal darkness concerning him. He left us, rather abruptly, on the pretence of sudden business in London.

M 4

An

An odd season this for busines in the metropolis ! From thence he has written me a letter that is very unlike himself, very anigmatical, and full of cold and formal civility. I thought I discovered a great cloudiness on his brow for some days before he left us ; and I am persuaded that something press'd with unusual weight upon his mind, though he would not confess it to me. I seem to have disobliged him, yet I know not how ; and my dear Audley assured me, on Seymour's sudden departure, that he was as much puzzled as I am to account for the striking change in the behaviour of our guest. The Lovers cannot have had one of the petty quarrels so apt to arise between Lovers, because, with a marvellous singularity of discretion and reserve, they haye abstained from
all

all private interviews. I know not what to think. Sometimes I fancy that his hasty and unexpected decampment is a mere amorous stratagem, to try the real force of his fair-one's affection; yet Seymour is by no means a creature of artifice. Sometimes I am ready to fear that, like others of his volatile sex and age, he is become a traitor in Love, and that his heart has been seduced by the sprightliness and bloom of Louisa to forget its loyalty to the poor, pensive, and pale Cornelia, who is in truth most grievously altered of late, and seems to suffer a daily diminution of her beauty and her health, that wounds me to the soul. Yet, as his penetrating eyes must have discovered that this cruel effect has been occasioned by her unquiet love for him, I am rather inclined

clined to believe that it would more increase than diminish the attachment of a heart so generous and so tender. But "I am weary of conjectures;" and, alas! I know not how "to end them," unless you can furnish us with some authentic intelligence of our too interesting fugitive. If there is any one here who is more in his confidence than I am, it must be his grateful Caroline, as he calls her; but if Caroline is really his prime confident (as I a little suspect) she is a very close and trusty one indeed, as I cannot force a syllable from her lips that will enable me to guess at his present intentions. The warm-hearted creature will only say of her protector, whom she deems it a crime to mention without confidence and respect, that she will pawn her life for the sincerity and continu-

ance

ance of his friendship for me, and of his love for Cornelia. Alas, the poor Cornelia! she declares herself greatly relieved by Seymour's sudden departure; and such is this great relief, that she can hardly speak of it without dropping a tear; but whether a tear of heavenly gratitude, or of mortal regret, I shall leave you, my dear sagacious sister, to guess. For my part, I am quite out of luck, in my attempts to study and to correct the restless feelings of both our friends; and as it often happens to a well-meaning mediator, I have partly lost the favour and confidence of each. Seymour is apparently displeased with me; and I have offended the gentle Cornelia too, by representing, perhaps too forcibly, the inability of her tender frame to persevere without risking her

life in an utter abjuration of the man she adores. Her delicate pride was a little wounded by my distrusting her fortitude; but I hope I have made my peace with her, by a lucky quotation of a passage from an old obscure play, which I happened to light upon very opportunely. It struck me as a pleasant hint to us good women, who pique ourselves now and then a little too much on the supposed strength of our virtuous resolutions. Here are the words for you;

“ What woman hath
So sail'd about the world of her own
heart,
Sounded each creek, survey'd each cor-
ner, but
That still there may remain much *terra*
incognita
To herself ?

You,

You, I know, my dear Lucy, will smile at the moral truth, as well as the poetical quaintness, of these lines : they made even Cornelia smile :

" Albeit unused to the smiling mood."

In truth, we are all grown a set of poor dismal creatures since our knight errant set forth from this castle in quest of new and unknown adventures ; even the laughter-loving Louisa has lost her gaiety, and mopes like a sick kitten. As to myself, you will perceive but too clearly, by my letter, that I am sadly out of tune and spirits ; but you will not wonder at my being so, when you know that, besides my anxiety for our dear suffering Cornelia, I have some inquietude to endure for my husband, who is summoned to the death-bed, I fear, of his old friend and favourite fellow-collegian poor Verney :

an event that gives a double chill to my heart, from a painful and perhaps foolish, yet natural, combination of ideas, which you, my dear Lucy, will be too ready to catch ; but though the health of our dear Audley has been ever more delicate than that of his early friend, let us hope that he is destined, for all our sakes, to enjoy a much longer life. Help us, my good girl, to dissipate the gloom that hangs over us, by your cheerful letters. I conclude that Seymour will post, before he returns to us, to his dear privy-counsellor Edmund ; and I charge you to give us the quickest tidings that you possibly can of his safe arrival at your gate ; as we shall otherwise begin to surmise, that the faithless rover is fled to Genoa, or the Lord knows whither. Take pity, therefore, on our ignorance.

rance and our terrors ; and, accepting the united kind wishes of the poor desolate females in this *man-deserted castle*, believe me ever

Your affectionate

HARRIOT.

LETTER XV.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

DO not think, my dearest Edmund, that I have treated you ungratefully, in keeping you for several weeks in suspense and dark quietude concerning the destiny of a friend for whom you have ever expressed the most engaging anxiety. A thousand circumstances have conspired to prevent my giving you more speedy intelligence
of

of my proceedings. Instead, therefore, of accusing me for being silent so long, give me great credit for attempting to write to you in these moments. I say attempting to write; for I am not sure that I can, even for your sake, confine my attention to my paper; and you will not wonder at my doubt, when I tell you, that every nerve in my frame is trembling with anxious impatience for the expected arrival of my Cornelia; yes, of *my* Cornelia. She is approaching to my arms, and I am waiting in the house of a good elderly *man of God*, with a blessed instrument in my pocket, called a *special licence*, prepared on purpose to make the dear angel my own Cornelia by the sweet lustre of the evening star. At this news my dear timid philosopher himself will burst into a shout of triumph.

triumphant transport. But hold ! I must not betray you into treacherous exultation, though I have the most sanguine hopes that we shall speedily exult together, on the consummation so devoutly and so prophaneley wished. I have sworn by Connubial Juno, to make the lovely fond creature my bride this very night, if all-powerful Love, with his capital agents, Opportunity and Importunity, can accomplish it. Do not exclaim against my rashness and precipitancy. I have been driven to the measures I am pursuing. If vows are taken against me, must I not oppose them by stronger vows ? Do you think Cupid is such a paltry engineer, that if a mine is contrived against him he cannot counteract it by a superior mine of his own contrivance ? Do not fear.—The plan of my surprize and at-

our dear diffident Cornelia stands in dreadful awe of your devout brother; and that although your pleasant and friendly sister Harriot warmly professes herself an advocate for our union, yet she sometimes makes use of arguments which produce, perhaps, an effect rather injurious to my cause, by offending the delicacy of Cornelia. For these and sundry other reasons, we agreed also in the opinion that my dear timid angel would be much more likely to indulge all the tenderness of her heart, if I could contrive to pass a day with her at a distance from her pious friends. We meditated on various schemes to accomplish this great object. Chance at length suggested a plan to us that I have pursued with the most sanguine hopes of success. You may, perhaps, have heard of a very worthy old clergyman,

gyman, whose name is Danvers, and who resides about fifteen miles to the South of your brother. With this Divine I had a slight personal acquaintance, as he is indebted for all his little preferment to the family of my mother. He is a primitive, simple, retired character ; as unlike as possible, they tell me, to those modern men of God who have made me, I confess, not very partial to priests. Danvers is fond of privacy and peace, and he was once uncommonly happy in his domestic circle ; but death has robbed him, not only of an excellent wife, but of a daughter who supplied her place in training his younger olive-branches, of which (as they seldom fail you know in holy ground) the good man has abundance. These distressing events in his family obliged the honest old par-

son, at the hazard of a little scandal, to call in a female assistant; and, most fortunately for me, the humble governess of his younger children is a sister of my grateful Caroline. While we were debating how to contrive a private interview for me with Cornelia at a distance from your brother's, Caroline happened to receive a letter from her sister, who appears to be a good girl, almost as warm-hearted as herself. This letter was to say, that, having many duties on her hands, which confined her at home, she was unable to accomplish her ardent desire of coming to wish her sister joy of her fortunate marriage; but, as the indulgent Cornelia had once had the goodness to bring Caroline to her, she most humbly petitioned for a repetition of that favour on the present joyous occasion.

This letter struck both Caroline and me as a ray of light from Heaven. Our quick imaginations began immediately to make it our guide in forming the project that I was so anxious to settle. It was agreed that I should depart suddenly from your brother's, and, by not explaining the cause or time of my absence, awaken all the little jealous surmises and fond alarms in the heart of Cornelia, to which that tender heart is sufficiently inclined; that I should hasten to renew and increase my acquaintance with Mr. Danvers, and engage him most firmly in my interest by every possible expedient. Caroline undertook to furnish me with constant intelligence concerning the health and affections of my dear and thus apparently deserted widow. Alas! my tender angel has suffered not a little

from this apparent desertion; but I hope soon to make her a rich atonement for life; and, as the intelligent Caroline says, nothing is so delicious and overcoming as the sudden sight of a Lover, whom a fond heart has almost despaired of ever seeing again. But, to resume the thread of my story: my excellent confederate undertook also to engage Cornelia for a distant day, to ride with her in the chaise to Mr. Danvers's, and to let Monson attend them on horseback. I was to have early notice of the time appointed, that I might arrive there the day before, and adjust all matters in the best method I could devise to accomplish the grand object of my wishes. I ought to tell you, however, in justice to the excellent Caroline, that before she would consent to this final arrangement,

arrangement of our plan, which looked, she said, like betraying her patroness into my hands, she bound me, by the most solemn oaths, that I should not attempt to make Cornelia my wife by any species of violence, but merely by the fair influence of fond and passionate intreaty, an engine which my zealous confederate thinks sufficiently powerful to ensure us a victory. Heaven grant that she may prove as true a prophet as she is a trusty and invaluable ally! I have at length accomplished all the important preliminary points. As you know I little regard either fatigue or expence in the pursuit of projects that interest my heart, you will readily believe that I have not been inactive or tardy in the great article of making Danvers my friend, I have been fortunately able to provide

vide for two branches of his family ; and I have so completely ingratiated myself with this warm-hearted old Divine, that I believe he would be happy to marry me to an empress, without stipulating or wishing for a mitre as his reward. I have prepared him with a general, and, as you may suppose, a favourable idea of my pretensions and views towards his lovely expected visitant. I have obtained a cordial promise from him, that, if I find it expedient, he will appear as my advocate, in opposition to any religious scruples that my fond, yet reluctant fair-one, may urge against me ; for this honest man of God most candidly acquiesces in my leading proposition, that if I pay an exterior reverence to our Established Religion, and solemnly engage to have my children educated in

in the belief of that Religion, there is nothing farther which ought to be required of me ; and all the rest is a private business between my own heart and Heaven. This delightful old Divine goes farther on my side, as he is both in theory and practice a warm friend to the support and increase of the world. He says, that my lovely widow, having promised to wed no other man, cannot refuse me without a crime, and a great crime too ; he says, no less than a breach of the primitive command ; a command which she has twice proved herself most admirably qualified to fulfill. Here is a Parson for you, my dear Edmund ! a Parson after my own heart ! for whose sake I shall be reconciled, I think, to the whole fraternity that I have so cordially detested. He is, in truth, a
plea-

pleasant original character, that you, my dear moralist, would have particular delight in observing. It was his maxim, he says, in early life, that if he had a faithful woman to embrace, and a spirited book to read, with a decent provision of daily bread, he should have every thing that his mind or body had a right to require ; and he held it wiser to sit contentedly down with these blessings, than to scramble for the clerical toys of the world. In conformity to these principles, he devoted himself to his wife and his study. The first I know only by her fruits : and these do her credit. In his study I am now writing ; and, if my heart and soul were not too much occupied by the scene in which I am soon to sustain so trying a part, I would give you a minute description of this neat little library,

brary, and the fathers in folio, who are now staring me in the face as if astonished at finding such an unclerical fellow as I am in the midst of such company. The worthier master of these venerable shelves is walking in the little orchard that I command from the window, and meditating, I trust, a very pious and eloquent harangue in my favour. With two such supporters as this liberal friendly man of God and the zealous beloved Caroline, I think it is hardly possible for me to fail; yet, as the hour of decision draws nearer and nearer, I feel the agitation of my heart increasing in the most painful degree. One moment I am overwhelmed with the transporting idea of perfect success; and the next, I am ready to sink under the agonies of a fancied disappointment.

But

But what should disappoint me! If she is a woman, and I have pretty good reasons for thinking her the very quintessence of woman in tenderness and affection, she must infallibly yield to the arguments of my Love, and the passionate ardour with which I mean to enforce them. But, my dearest friend, I really can write to you no longer; and, trust me, I have put no little constraint on myself in writing thus far. Heaven knows if you will find what I have written intelligible: I have no time, or faculties, to examine. My scrawl will at least convince you that I am, however agitated, and however precipitate in your opinion, yet ever

Your grateful and affectionate,
though ungovernable,

SEYMOUR.

P. S.

P. S. I am just withdrawing from the Parsonage, as I think it better for me not to surprise the dear tender creature till she is refreshed after her little journey ; I have determined, therefore, not to make my appearance till after their early dinner. Heavens ! if she should not arrive to that dinner ! How I tremble, lest my sweet angel's health, which, as Caroline writes me word, is grown more and more delicate, should prevent her joining this little party, though she has promised to be with them ; for she is all sweetness and good-nature, and has contracted an esteem for the venerable Danvers ! Adieu ! I shall put this letter, unsealed, into my pocket, to dispatch to you from the little inn to which I am retreating.

P. S.

P. S. the second.

Joy ! Joy ! my dear Edmund. I am this instant enlivened by a delicious billet from the faithful Caroline. My angel is actually arrived ; her health a little restored, her spirits tenderly in tune ; the sweet soul was much gratified by an ostensible letter which I lately sent my trusty confidant, expressing the real anxiety of my soul concerning the late visible change in her health. Now, Love and Eloquence, inspire me ! Farewell.—The moments grow precious indeed, for before midnight I shall be as blest as a demi-god or as miserable as a demon. Do not blame me. The chance is worth the conflict. Whatever its event, I will, if I am alive, assuredly write to you tomorrow ; so hope the best, and once more farewell.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

A LL is over.—We have encoun-
tered; and how severe the en-
counter has proved to both parties you
may judge, when I tell you that each
may describe the event in the famous
words of poor Francis the First of France,
“ We have lost every thing but our
Honour.” Never was a contest more
obstinately supported; victory there is
none; nor any prospect of renewing
the contention. I am distracted with
a thousand unutterable feelings, com-
pounded chiefly of shame, admiration,
and anger. I have acted so directly
opposite to your counsels, that I cannot
fly to you for consolation; for though

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I am

I am certain you would still very willingly give me all in your power, I could not receive any thing like comfort from you under my present sensations. It seems as if I could bear the sound of no human voice but that of Giuliana. I shall steal away to Italy; and if I can sufficiently calm my perturbed spirits as I travel, I will give you a faithful narrative of the scene which has made me perhaps a wretch for life. At present I am so unable to decypher my own complicated emotions, that I really cannot tell whether my love is heightened or extinguished. In one moment the exquisite tenderness of Cornelia is the object of my idolatry; in the next, her pride and superstition awaken my indignation and abhorrence. Yet her tenderness—O God! my dear Edmund, you never saw

saw or heard of such angelic tenderness—
but you shall hear it all when I grow
more composed.—Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

IT falls to my lot, my dear Lucy, to give you that intelligence which I solicited from you. Would to Heaven it were more cheerful! But the intractable impetuous Seymour has involved himself, and all of us, in gloom and wretchedness. Instead of passing a few social and comfortable weeks with you and Edmund, as I hoped he would, this hasty provoking creature

has been trying a desperate project with the poor unprepared Cornelia. He has reduced her shattered nerves to the most pitiable weakness that you can possibly imagine, but without gaining the triumph he expected over her religious resolution.

You, I know, my good girl, will join with me in admiring, in idolizing, the unconquerable fortitude of this pure angel ; and in lamenting, at the same time, the severe destiny by which her tranquillity and her health are so cruelly destroyed. But I am talking to you as if you were already apprized of the distressing story that I have to impart. You will, I know, be painfully eager to hear all the particulars ; and, as you have an unquestionable right to hear them, I will give you as many as I can.

If Caroline had not her high obligations, her ardent gratitude, and great merit of all kinds, to atone for one indiscretion, I know not how it would be possible for me to forgive her; for she has been, in great measure, the source of all our present distress. She has been the confederate of Seymour in a long train of artifice and deceit towards Cornelia; to which I should have thought her ingenuous nature could never have consented. But Gratitude, like Love, may be allowed to be blind; and this warm-hearted creature has acted in the whole affair from such generous motives, and is so deep a sufferer in her own heart and soul from the failure of the project, that, instead of feeling any lasting anger against her, she is nearly as much the object of my pity and admiration as our

dear unsubdued, but exhausted and almost lifeless, Cornelia herself.

Instead of beginning my story as I ought to do, I am still running into reflections upon it. But, that I may not torture your affectionate curiosity, I will grow a more methodical historian, and relate all I know in due order.

Yesterday morning the Monsoms and Cornelia set forth, on an expedition for the day, to visit a very worthy old rural Divine, whose house and young family have been lately entrusted to a sister of Caroline's; and as the girl may be thought rather too young herself for the office of such a governess, our good Cornelia has been solicitous to countenance her, by attending her favourite Caroline whenever she went to see her sister. I little thought that

the

the expedition of yesterday had any motive on the part of Caroline, except sisterly affection. Cornelia was rather inclined to remain with us, but I united my entreaties to those of the eager suppliant Caroline, and prevailed on her to join the little party, as I thought the ride and the amusement of a new cheerful scene would be beneficial to her declining health. In the evening I and Louisa grew very anxious for her return. The clock struck nine, and no Cornelia appeared, though we had charged her to avoid the being abroad after sun-set. As my niece and I were alone, we began to alarm ourselves with various fancied and fearful causes of her delay. We sauntered in weary expectation, and, after looking a hundred times over the pales, were returning in despair into the house,

O 4 when

when we heard a horseman galloping at full speed behind us, which, as we had now only the stars to light us, increased our alarm. It was Monson, whom the considerate Caroline had dispatched to save us from painful anxiety. He assured us that Cornelia was safe and well; but that the hours had glided away so imperceptibly, and the evening was grown so late before she thought of departing from Mr. Danvers's, that she would not return till the morrow. My apprehensions were more awakened than quieted by this message. I began to cross-examine Monson. He is a brave honest creature, without any talents for equivocation. I soon brought him to a confession that Seymour had joined the party. Judge, my dear girl, of the unutterable tumult of joy and concern,

of

of hope and fear, that began to reign in my thoughts from this information. I could get little more from Monson. He conjured me to hope and believe the best, and to wait patiently for the important tidings of next day; offering to ride back immediately, that I might have those tidings with the utmost expedition. This, however, I would not allow. We all withdrew to our beds; but, for my part, I could not sleep a wink; and, about one, I heard the rattle of Cornelia's chaise, driving hastily to the door. I guessed how it was; and flew, half-naked, with my night-gown wrapped round me, to receive her. She had crossed the hall, and reached the library; but could get no farther. The moment I appeared, she sprang towards me; but sunk into my arms, and fainted. As soon as she revived,

revived, she asked wildly for her children ; and, hurrying into her chamber, she threw herself on her knees by the side of their bed, and exclaimed, “ O my dear infants, it is for your sake that I have torn my poor heart to pieces ! and God himself will rear you in innocence and happiness as my reward. But what will become of the lost Seymour ? His violent nature will plunge him in vice, in misery, in perdition ! ” At these words her whole frame was convulsed with anguish.—The penitent and affrighted Caroline joined with me in conjuring her to be calm and silent ; to let us put her immediately to bed, and give her some of the medicine to which she has frequently had recourse of late, and with constant good effect, in the severe agitation of her nerves. The poor deso-

late

late soul was now all obedience to our injunctions. She spoke not a syllable more, but to express her sorrow for proving such a source of trouble to her friends, and to bless us for our attention. Caroline and I did not stir from her chamber till we had seen her tolerably composed on her pillow. We then retired together to my room, where the self-accusing Caroline began at once to condemn and to apologize for her own conduct.

It seems, this well-meaning creature had unguardedly betrayed to Seymour the hasty vow of Cornelia. From that moment his fiery indignant spirit became intractable. Nothing would appease him but a promise from Caroline to assist him in the secret contrivance of such a project as they have just carried into execution. Caroline confesses
they

they both thought, and I must own I should have been of their opinion, that if Seymour could obtain any good private opportunity of urging Cornelia to an instant marriage, she was too deeply enamoured to have the power of resisting his ardent and passionate entreaties. I must say, their plot was very ingeniously conducted. Seymour, indefatigable in every pursuit where his affections are interested, and sanguine in every hope that his heart and fancy conspire to cherish, had contrived to make the old clergyman Mr. Danvers his hearty friend and advocate, and had provided himself with a special licence, that, if a single moment of yielding tenderness should present itself, he might be sure of rendering it decisive, and effectually preclude the dear scrupulous reluctant Cornelia from all possibility of

of receding. The vehement and artful creature, though he had been lurking some time at Mr. Danvers's, did not make his appearance till after dinner. Our sweet, unconscious, and unsuspecting friend was visibly surprized and delighted at the first sight of him. What passed in their private conference my informer cannot tell; but I imagine and hope that Edmund will have a full account of this rash and cruel affair from the hot-brained lover himself. Alas! poor fellow, he is probably cool enough by this time; for I have some reason to suppose that he passed the night, like a sad wild Quixote as he is, on horseback, and perhaps wandering through our woods; but more of his nightly adventure in its proper place. I must return to Mr. Danvers's. Caroline says, that, when

Sey-

Seymour had been about two hours alone with Cornelia, he came with a most agitated countenance to Mr. Danvers, and said, "I have been talking, Sir, to no purpose, to the most marble-hearted woman that God ever created. Pray, my good venerable friend, pray come, and try for me if your arguments have more influence with her than mine." Caroline remained with her sister, while Seymour renewed his attack with his reverend ally. She says, she could hear that their discourse was very warm and loud; but as no one came out of the room, and it grew late, she sent off her husband to me, with the best message that she could devise in her confusion, to prevent my being alarmed. The secret debate was continued, with encreasing vehemence, for more than another hour; when

when Danvers came out to Caroline, exclaiming, “ Your lady is an angel indeed ! I did not think there could be such divine eloquence, and such angelic integrity and fortitude, in woman ! But pray go and persuade her not to depart, as she talks of doing, at this late hour ; but to honour and sanctify my humble roof by sleeping under it. I protest to God, she shall be obeyed as an angel in all things. I will sooner forfeit all the great blessings that I owe to the generosity of Mr. Seymour, than ever appear as her antagonist again. She must be obeyed ; but pray go, and try to prevail on her to stay with us to night.” Upon this the poor disconcerted Caroline ventured into the room, abashed and trembling, as she says, lest she should have incurred the everlasting displeasure of that kind patroness

ness whom it would be worse than death to offend. On her opening the door, a scene presented itself to her exactly the reverse of what she expected. Seymour was silent, dejected, weeping; Cornelia speaking, with a countenance radiant and glowing. She interrupted and anticipated the first prayer of the penitent Caroline for pardon. "Your deceit, my good friend, cried the forgiving angel, has, I know, arisen partly from mistaken kindness towards me, and partly from a laudable gratitude towards one whose services to you may surely give a sanction to any virtuous excess. But, for Heaven's sake, my dear Caroline, order the chaise immediately." "Aye, order it immediately," cried Seymour, starting from a sort of fallen reverie. The man whose services she condescends to compliment

pliment cannot obtain from her the little sacrifice of her pride." "Un-generous Seymour; exclaimed the offended angel; have you a right to accuse me of pride? you, to whom I have fondly declared that, if you were but a faithful worshiper of the God I worship, I would rather be your wife than married to any man, however exalted by faculties or station?" At this very just and tender reproof the fallen and imperious Seymour threw himself at her feet, and began to kiss her hand with great vehemence, bathing it with his tears. Caroline paused, and hoped that the order for the chaise would be recalled; but, alas! it was repeated by the unshaken Cornelia. "It is decided then, cried Seymour, springing up with a frantic air: we are to part for ever!" Caroline heard no more; but,

quitting the room, went to order the chaise; and, to her astonishment, saw Cornelia get into it unattended by Seymour. She says, that her own panic at that moment was the most dreadful she ever felt; for she concluded, that being resolved not to survive this gallant disappointment, he was preparing to destroy himself, and she expected to hear the sound of his pistol. An irresistible impulse hurried her, she says, in this idea, into the little parlour where Cornelia had left him. She found him sitting, with a terrific sternness of features, and eyes flashing with a disdainful fury; but, at the sight of his grateful and anxious Caroline, his proud heart softened. He caught her in his arms, and exclaimed, "Heaven bless thee, thou most generous of friends! thou art the only being that I have
ever

ever met with on earth whose ideas of Love and Friendship appear equal to my own. Go, and enjoy the blessings which thy affectionate heart has so well deserved; and I conjure thee, let them not be poisoned by too keen a sense of my miserable lot. The extreme acuteness of my present anguish cannot last long. Go, my tender Caroline, go to thy happy Monson; who shall find me his friend, whether I live or die."

Caroline, having hastily extorted a promise from him, that he would do nothing desperate to destroy his life, or impair his health, now followed Cornelia, who was receiving the compliments, or rather the adorations, of the venerable Danvers, who had handed her into her chaise, and continued to express his admiration of her principles and conduct, and his

high sense of the honour which her visit had conferred upon him. As soon as they drove from his door, Caroline began to repeat her entreaties for pardon; but the poor Cornelia was in no condition to reply. The great efforts she had made to sustain her spirit in this long conference, and final parting, as she imagined, with Seymour, had so miserably exhausted her little portion of strength, that, as soon as she was alone with Caroline, she sunk into such a state of debility and tears as frightened her attendant to the greatest degree. The terrified Caroline thought it would be hardly possible to bring her home alive, and earnestly implored her to turn back and pass the night under the friendly roof of Mr. Dabvers; but, in spite of her extreme bodily weakness, the dear angel was firm in

in her purpose of returning. She declared that she was already much relieved by her tears, and that, if Caroline would have the goodness to let her be quite silent, her strength and spirits would gradually revive. Caroline says they were perfectly mute for several miles. Cornelia herself broke the silence, by asking her in what condition she had left the rash, mortified, and indignant Seymour. When Caroline described the change in his features, from pride and fury to tenderness and gratitude, and repeated the kind words in which he took leave of her, the poor Cornelia burst into a fresh agony of tears; and just as this had subsided they arrived at our door.—Cornelia, in getting out of the chaise, thought to support herself on the arm of the servant who had attended her

on horseback; but, to her astonishment, she perceived, in reaching the ground, that she had leant upon Seymour. She started, and exclaimed, "O Heaven, are you come to persecute me here!" "No, Madam," replied her hasty lover, severely galled by her exclamation, "it is you alone who have the spirit of persecution—I persecute no one—I thought it my duty, as a man, to guard you hither; and since I am rewarded only by a reproof, I here bid you farewell for ever." With this bitter adieu he sprang hastily upon his horse, and galloped away with all possible speed, as if he had no desire but to get at a distance from the woman by whom, though he knows she loves him to distraction, he thought himself insulted. It was, I imagine, this last unexpected meeting and

and parting which occasioned the fainting of our dear unhappy friend at the time when I flew to receive her.— Alas! how very grievous it is, that two such very amiable creatures, so mutually enamoured, should only prove a source of misery to each other! yet I am now sadly afraid that they are destined to be so as long as they exist. What is become of the fiery Seymour, Heaven only knows! I most cordially hope that he is bending his course to your house; as there is no place, I think, where he can be so kindly and properly taken care of in his present vexatious delirium. I charge you, my dear Lucy, to give us the first news of him that you hear with the utmost expedition. This, indeed, I deserve, for writing to you, as I do at present, with sleepless and aching eyes.

eyes. I was so eager to get all these particulars I could from Caroline, that we sat up together till five this morning, and I quitted my bed again before nine to visit my poor Cornelius, and to dispatch this long history to you by the post of to-day. My dear patient has had a wretched night, and is so faint and dejected that I have insisted on her remaining in bed till she hears the first dinner-bell.—My dear Audley is at present in happy ignorance of all these distressing adventures, and I believe I shall keep him so till he returns to us; for he has vexations more than enough where he is. Poor Verney died, as we expected; and my good husband has a very troublesome executorship to engross his attention.—I tell him, that I shall begin to give him a bad character to the world, to
exempt

exempt him from these burdensome offices, which he has so frequently drawn upon himself by his activity and benevolence.

I have kept this unsealed to the last moment, in hopes that I might tell you with comfort that Cornelia was a little revived. She is just come down stairs ~~but~~, alas! with looks so piteous, and such an appearance of weakness and dejection, that you, my dear tender Lucy, could hardly cast an eye on her sadly altered countenance without bursting into tears. Even our young and joyous Louisa says she never saw a figure so affecting. This good girl has a very tender heart, with all her wild vivacity; and behaves to Cornelia with a sweet compassionate gentleness that pleases me very much! Adieu. Pray

White

wrote to us directly; and, accepting our united good wishes, believe me ever

Your affectionate

HARRIOR.

LETTER XYIII.

FROM LUCY TO MRS. AUDLEY.

YOU are entitled, my dear Har-
riot, to my most cordial and
speedy thanks, for your very kind and
interesting, but grievous, account of
your lovely guest, and the provoking,
ungovernable, precipitate Seyrbout :
I know not whether he has most ex-
cited my anger or my pity, by this
frantic measure, which, his despond-
ing friend Edmund says, will prove
his

his utter destruction. I never saw my brother so deeply vexed and mortified by any mischance relating to himself as he is by this rash and luckless proceeding of Seymour. As to myself, you know I seldom catch his dependency on any occasion; and I derive a ray of hope, which I am truly happy to communicate to you, from one expression in a brief and hasty billet that Edmund has just received. We suppose it was written just after the fatal conference, and perhaps before he attended Cornelia to your door. However that may be, the expression that inclines me not to despair is this: after describing the turbulent wretchedness of his mind, he says, "It seems as if I could bear the sound of no human voice but that of Giuliana—I shall steal away to Italy." Now, my good

good Harriot, do you not join with me in hoping that our divine enthusiast of Genoa may repay the important service she received from this generous misguided mortal; and, after soothing the fiery tumult in his affections, restore him to us the reasonable religious being that we have so vainly endeavoured to make him; and, as the fond Cornelia once exclaimed to you,

" Were he but Christian, what could man be more!"

His many noble and endearing virtues have, I confess, made such an impression on me, that I cannot bring myself to think very ill of him or his destiny. I cannot allow my imagination, to believe, that a man whose good deeds have been so manifold and great, I might even say so Christian,

will
ever

will be utterly abandoned by Providence. No, my dear, I am persuaded, that, instead of being plunged, as Edmund fears, in a long course of licentiousness and distraction, he will be awakened by his and our good angel Giuliana to a happy sense of all his errors; and return at last to repay us, for all the painful inquietude which his blind impetuosity and unsettled faith have occasioned to us. Pray support the dear drooping Cornelia by this idea. Pray tell her also, that I am ready to worship her religious magnanimity; and that I speak with a *prophetic confidence*, when I say, that I shall see it rewarded. Heaven bless her! and all your household! I close in extreme haste, that I may answer your anxious enquiry by the returning post.

Ever your affectionate and sanguine
LUCY.

P. S. Pray let me hear again very speedily of the dear sufferer's health. Her soul, I perceive, is fully equal to the severest of trials. But, alas! what a feeble second has that pure and resolute soul in her very delicate and now enervated frame!

LETTER XIX.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

WE revive a little, my good girl; your very kind and animating suggestion has done us more essential good than all our medical restoratives. Since I wrote to you I have passed some days in the most bitter anxiety. The sensible and sanguine Brensil himself,
who

who is, you know, my oracle in medicine, was so affected and alarmed, that he was little able to furnish me with that hope and courage which I endeavoured to catch from him, and which, on most occasions, he is much inclined and well qualified to inspire. He says he never in his life beheld a human frame reduced to such extreme debility by the mere agitations of heart and mind. As he is, you know, perfectly worthy of confidence, I thought it best to entrust him with the whole private history ; and I was pleased with the extreme sensibility which he discovered on hearing what his two friends had endured. The tenderness of Cornelia, and the gallantry of Seymour, had interested him so much in their affection, that he was mortified as much as we are by the unfortunate turn it has taken,

taken. Though he professes to admire the devout fortitude of our friend, I can perceive that he would gladly have given a dose of opium to her Piety, and of hartshorn to her Love, to secure a prosperous issue to the precipitate enterprise of the engaging Seymour. Who, as Brensil says, can know him, and not wish his prosperity? It is, I am convinced, an affectionate dread of proving the bane of his prosperity that gives the keenest anguish to the heart of Cornelia. Fond as she is of the fascinating creature, she could (I am now persuaded) easily relinquish his society, enchanting as it is, and feel herself recompensed by the delight and pride she takes in devoting herself to her children, if she were not haunted by the terror that her rejection of Seymour will plunge that impetuous mortal into

she

the most ruinous excesses of vice and folly.^{but} This terror had gained such dominion over her thoughts, that she could hardly utter any other idea in the two or three first days after the cruel conference. Indeed we allowed her to speak but little; and she was, and still remains, much more inclined to silence than to conversation. At first it seemed as if all her bodily faculties were exhausted and destroyed, by the conflict she had endured. She had utterly lost her appetite, and even her palate; at times a sort of cold insensibility, like petrifaction, appeared to be creeping over her frame. This would be succeeded by such a tremulous irritation of the nerves, and such a tendency to tears, that a single word addressed to her would sometimes make her weep. Brinsford was griev-

ously afraid that she was sinking into a rapid atrophy, which would hurry her to the grave. He has watched this most interesting of patients with a parental anxiety. He has got various prescriptions for her from the physician, whose insight into human maladies and affections is much deeper, he says, than that of all his fraternity. But they both agree that, as the heart of our tender friend is the main seat of her disorder, nothing will so effectually contribute to her restoration as the balm of sympathy and friendship assiduously applied to this lacerated heart. Their opinion has been visibly confirmed by the favourable impression which your kind letter, my dear Lucy, produced upon her spirits. When I read to her what you say of Giuliana, a sudden flush arose on her pale cheek,

and her funk eyes sparkled with momentary joy. "Ah, my dear Harriot; she said, kind as you are, Lucy understands me better than you do. My hapless love is much more disinterested than you imagine. Believe me, I would most gladly renounce all expectations, and every wish of seeing Seymour again in this world, if some kind angel would give me an assurance of meeting him in Heaven. But, to think that I may be instrumental to the final perdition of a being so generous and so beloved!—'tis that, she cried, bursting into an agony of tears—'tis that which has distracted me!" But recovering herself with an astonishing quickness and spirit, "No, she continued, I will no longer suffer this horrid apprehension to persecute my poor brain: I will cling to Lucy's

most comfortable idea—He is—he is too good to be abandoned by Providence!"

You may judge, my dear, from your own heart, how zealously the penitent Caroline and I labour together to make the most of your consolatory suggestion, and to confirm our angelic patient in this train of thought. I must do Caroline the justice to say that, however blameable she might be in her secret and unfortunate, but tempting, conspiracy, she has made every compensation that a tender and contrite heart could make by the most indefatigable and affectionate attention to our dear invalid. The state of Cornelia is such as requires the most delicate management; and without the assistance of Caroline I should find myself very unequal to it: this good creature,

full

full of gratitude and every quick feeling, has the rare talent of knowing how to be very assiduous about the sick, without molesting or fatiguing them.

One of the most difficult points we have had to regulate has been the degree of indulgence we should shew to our dear patient concerning her children; she has been frequently distracted between her desire to have the sweet boys with her, and her want of strength to support their society. To make the matter more distressing, we have not been able to keep the little lively rogue William from asking his mother perpetual questions concerning his favourite Mr. Seymour; such as, "Why he went away from us? when he will come back—whom he is gone to see?" and a thousand others continually sug-

gested by infantine curiosity and affection.

There have been days when such little questions as these were like so many daggers; but at length, I thank Heaven, the palpitating heart of our dear, harrassed friend is grown more composed. To-day I think I see something of her former self both in her countenance and conversation. She has been so deplorably low, that I have rather rejoiced that my husband was abroad, as she could not have supported even his society; but I begin now to wish ardently for his return, because I think her so materially revived that his gentle and soothing manners will, I am persuaded, in her present state, contribute to her recovery. We do not, however, expect him this week; and, I hope, before that time the sweet, trem-

trembling convalescent will receive the most powerful of cordials in a good account of the wanderer for whose safety and welfare she is so painfully anxious.

As he departed in such indignation, I question if he will have the grace, which he certainly ought to have, to address a letter of apology to Cornelia ; but, at all events, Edmund will hear of his movements ; and I need not request you to dispatch the first tidings you receive as rapidly as you can to

Your affectionate

HARRIOT.

P. S. My dear patient charges me to send her love ; and to add her protestation, that she is sure she is infinitely better than I have represented her, whatever my representation may be.

Q 4

My

My only way of taking vengeance for this oblique stroke at my veracity shall be, to read this postscript aloud, and this only, after adding to it, that I sincerely hope and expect to see my patient quite herself again in another week or two. Farewell,

LETTER XX.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY,

AT length I am got to Dover, but with a mind more tumultuous than the sea I am going to cross. It was not thus with me, my dear Edmund, when I was last at this port with our lovely enthusiast, the truly impassioned Giuliana; that heavenly woman

woman could never have uttered such an insult to the man she loved as I have heard, since I dispatched my short and hasty billet to you, from the lips of her whom I was once fool enough to think superior in tenderness to Giuliana herself.

When the inflexible bigot ordered her chaise to depart from Danvers's, late at night as it was, indignation and resentment seemed to deprive me of motion. I could not put her into the carriage which was to convey her with such unseasonable barbarity from him who had hoped to pass a bridal night in her arms. She bade me adieu with a cold stately pride. It robbed me of utterance, and almost of my senses. I continued sitting in the room she quitted, with a brain ready to split with rage and disappointment. My good, grateful

grateful Caroline came to give me a tenderer farewell. Her softness was my preservation. I wept upon her bosom. I began to think less harshly of Cornelia, because this most faithful of creatures still laboured to convince me of her love. I dismissed this kind and sympathetic confidant with the benediction of my heart, whose fiery anguish she had softened and relieved. As soon as they drove away from Danvers's, I ordered my horse that I might attend them unsuspected; and, before I mounted to gallop after the chaise, I scrawled my short and dismal letter to you. I soon overtook the women; it was my intention merely to see them safe home, without letting them know that I did so; but as I approached your brother's, my heart was more and more softened, by a recollection of many

many little proofs which Cornelia had there exhibited of her fondness towards me, and I could not resist the temptation of helping her to alight from the carriage. She started at the sight of me, and asked me, with an insulting tone that is still re-echoed round my heart, “ If I was come to *persecute* her there ? ” I hope the spirit of my instantaneous reply has convinced her of the injury she did me by that base and barbarous expression. If it has not, my present conduct shall soon prove to her that an injurious word was never more misapplied. If I have any knowledge of my own heart and mind, never was a human being less inclined than myself either to inflict or to endure persecution in any shape. My soul abhors every shadow of tyranny ; my evil destiny seems determined that I shall

I shall only prove a source of pain to those whose permanent happiness I had the most ardent wish to promote. But, in removing far from them, I may diminish perhaps this unfortunate influence on their comfort. One satisfaction I shall at least possess, that I can no longer be upbraided with a design of persecuting her whose tranquillity, ungrateful as she is, I would willingly die to secure. To relinquish life, indeed, would be no sacrifice to me at present. I never wished to live, but for the sake of conferring happiness on the objects of my affection; but, as my perverse stars seem to put this out of my power, they may terminate my existence whenever they please. I can die, as I have lived, without fear; because assuredly I never meant to do any great deliberate evil; and I have
vainly

vainly hoped to accomplish much good, in which I have been thwarted, I know not why, by that mysterious power to whom, for want of a better name, we give the title of Destiny or Chance. The good Caroline expressed to me a terror for which I must love her still more than I did, though it shews more the trembling sensibility of her own heart, than her knowledge of my character: she was terrified lest I should destroy myself in the agony of mortified affection; but, as you know, my dear friend, I have ever considered suicide, when it does not proceed from frenzy, as the act of a coward and a fool. It is cowardice to run into the cellar because the house you inhabit happens to be shaken by thunder. It is folly not to reflect that, if chance has unexpectedly made you wretched,

the

the same chance may as suddenly reverse her operation.

You see I can play the resolute philosopher, even in my fits of bitterest vexation. I confess, however, that my mind is dismally out of tune; but time, and a change of scene, with a little bodily repose, to which I have been too great a stranger of late, may do much to tranquillize my spirits. I have taken a very long journey since I wrote; for I have been at my own house, and arranged all matters with my steward for a very long absence. Heaven only knows when I may return to this island, perhaps never; but wherever I may exist, there, my dear Edmund, you will certainly have a faithful, though perhaps a very unhappy friend, in

Your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I thought of writing a few lines to my good Caroline ; but, on reflection, I shall be silent, lest I should say too little or too much ; and lest I should involve the excellent creature in new difficulties, and expose her to unpleasant suspicions from her inflexible patroness. Be so good, however, as to inform this kind, anxious, humble friend of mine, that I am alive, and tolerably well. As to Cornelia, I shall not persecute her with any message whatever.

I promised you a full account of our very long and ill-concluded conference ; and I have begun at times to throw some parts of it upon paper ; but the impression of the agonizing scene has recurred so strongly upon my heart, in these attempts to describe it minutely, that I have hitherto been able

able to make but little regular progress in my narrative. I have written, however, many detached parts of it, as they struck my memory. It shall be my evening's employment, as I travel, to methodize these; and I will send you, in my first pacquet from the continent, a fair transcript of the whole. I must now bid you hastily adieu; for my baggage is already on board, the wind is fair, and I am summoned.— My thoughts are already failed to Genoa. I cannot explain nor express to you the passionate eagerness that I feel to hear again the touching voice of Giuliana. Farewell.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE restless wanderer, for whom,
my dear Edmund, you will be
too solicitous, is safe at Lyons. I was
eager to reach this city for various
reasons; and chose, in the vain hope
of amusement, to take a new way of
approaching it. At Calais I procured
a French coasting vessel, and landing
at Rochelle, crossed the country by
the shortest road to Lyons. The sea
pleases my fancy at present much more
than land. I had a curiosity to see this
part of the French coast; and was
somewhat amused in reflecting on the
different scenes and characters that it

brought to my memory. At the fight of La Hogue I felt a momentary triumph, while imagination presented to my view the splendid ships of Tourville destroyed by the matchless bravery of our English sailors. As we sailed by Belleisle, I could not help giving a sigh; but it was a sigh of envy, rather than compassion, to the shade of the accomplished Sir William Williams, repeating, with peculiar satisfaction, as my eyes were fixed on the little island,

"Here foremost in the dangerous paths
of fame,

Young Williams fought for England's
fair renown."

His mind each Muse, each Grace adorn'd
his frames.

Nor Envy dur'd to view him with a
frown."

You remember Gray's spirited epitaph
on this gallant young soldier.

What

What a capital advantage it is to have found an honourable place in the pages of an unperishing poet! I might have failed twenty times by Belleisle without honouring the memory of Sir William Williams, had he not been immortalized by this epitaph.

In passing the isle of Rhœ, all the vanity and vices of Buckingham presented themselves to my thoughts; but when I landed at Rochelle, I forgot my own countrymen, in recollecting the brave Hugonots, and the horrid extremities they suffered here in defending themselves against a barbarous persecution. I think there is something peculiarly soothing to the spirits in the gentle motion of a vessel, and the mixture of sea and land prospect as you sail along an extensive coast. I found this part of my expe-

dition much the most medicinal to my mind. When I began to be jolted in a chaise again, all my spleenetic sensations returned with new force. The scenes as I passed, though they had the advantage of novelty, afforded me no amusement. The ragged gaiety of the French peasants, instead of tempting me to smile, filled me with a mixed emotion of pity, and contempt. "Poor merry fools," said I, "ye have not sense enough to perceive your own glaring misfortunes!"

Since my arrival at Lyons, my harsh and untuned spirit has been a little softened and disciplined by an affecting circumstance among the good people who were particularly kind to me and the poor Giuliana during my alarming illness in this city: there was a widow lady, a native of Switzerland,

advanced

advanced in life, of an admirable understanding, and most engaging manners. Her only child, a very handsome and accomplished young fellow, had just got a commission in the Swiss service; the first news I heard at my hotel was the luckless fate of this fine lad, who lost his life about three weeks ago, in a sudden fray concerning a beautiful girl of family and fortune, whose hand he had great hopes of obtaining. I felt myself bound in gratitude to pay a visit of consolation to his afflicted mother as soon as I heard of her calamity. Our unexpected meeting has, I trust, been of great service to us both. In catching the tenderness of her sorrow, I have certainly corrected, in some degree, the asperity of my own mind; and if I have not reconciled her to her loss by argument,

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I have

I have at least soothed her anguish by sympathy. When she related to me, with the frankness of true affliction, all her very bitter maternal sensations, I could not help exclaiming, "Would to Heaven, my dear Madam, that I could restore your son to you, by supplying his place in the grave! Such an exchange would be a blessing to us all, for my life has lately been made as wretched as his had the prospect of being happy." I said this to ease the fullness of my own heart, and to call off the mind of this deeply-feeling mother from her own poignant distress. The latter effect it produced completely; for, struck by the pathetic energy with which I had uttered this wish, she caught hold of my hand, and conjured me to tell her what could have poisoned the enjoyments of a person

son who, in recovering health, she said, seemed to have recovered every thing that could be wanting to ensure his felicity.

In the hope of diverting her sorrow, I gave her my whole history. She listened to it with great attention, and made many sensible and friendly remarks as I proceeded. When I had finished, she expressed, with that touching eloquence which keen feelings generally inspire, her admiration and her pity for Cornelia. "Good Heaven!" she exclaimed, "to lose such a lover, and to lose him from such a motive, must be still more excruciating than the death of a darling child; for if the beloved object is not so dear to her, which I think in nature it cannot be, yet in her case there is the dread of losing it through all eternity. Have

R 4 you,

you, my dear Sir, have you ever coolly reflected on the horrors which this idea must impress on the heart of a tender, impassioned woman? Poor, poor Cornelia! she is more miserable than I am. My son was, I bless God, untainted by the wretched infidelity so common in the world; and I trust a few years will restore us to each other in a better life. This blessed trust is my support; but what, my misguided friend, what is there to support your divine, yet desolate Cornelia? What would the prospect of Heaven itself be to me, if I had no assurance of meeting there the idols of my heart! yet, in one point of view, this lady for whom you have made me weep, though I thought my tears all exhausted or engrossed by my own selfish sorrow, she, I say, has still one advantage over me: the God
that

that she and I worship has ceased to open the grave ; he recalls no second Lazarus from the tomb ; but such a miracle as might change her affliction into joy is still frequently visible on the earth. Perhaps a day never passes in which his divine mercy does not recall to himself the alienated heart of some unbeliever. O that I could reward you for the generous interest you have taken in my affliction, by being in any degree instrumental to such a blessed change in my young and most unfortunately misguided friend ! but, alas, she added with a deep sigh, I have seen in a brother of my own the intractable and obdurate pride which an early taint of Infidelity inspires ; and since the arguments and the tears of your angelic Cornelia were unable to convert you, I should be vain indeed

deed, if I thought any thing that an afflicted old woman could urge to you might produce that effect. No, my dear, rash friend, God only can produce it; and I most devoutly hope that he will." The good old lady uttered her pious hopes with such an air of maternal tenderness and anxiety for my welfare, that I was affected almost to tears, and felt, for the first time in my life, that I had lost a great deal in losing my mother before I was old enough to comprehend the endearing charm of maternal solicitude and affection. I soon turned the conversation to other subjects, that I might say nothing offensive to her friendly and devout spirit. We perfectly agreed in one serious sentiment, that those who die early seem to be the favourites of Heaven; and we parted, both pleased
and

and pained by each other, and both, I think, the better for our interview. For my part, I felt my mind, as I have already told you, much softened; and I began to think of Cornelia with tenderness, admiration, and pity, instead of fierce disdain and indignant resentment. Indeed, this turn of mind had been already produced, in some degree, by my gradual recollection of all the tenderer passages in our long conference at Mr. Danvers's.—My soul was at first so full of indignation, for the bitter and unmerited insult with which she dismissed me at your brother's door, that, in trying to throw all our discourse on paper, I could for some time only recollect completely those parts of it in which her bigotry and her pride were most conspicuous; but, by degrees, every tenderer expression occurred with

with new force to my recollection ;
and in the inclosed paper you will find
a very faithful narrative, as I promised
you, of our important conference. I
will only detain you from its perusal
while I make one very honest confes-
sion, and it is this : I have perused the
fair transcript I send you several times ;
and at every fresh reading I have,
without shrinking from my own te-
nents, felt myself more and more en-
moured of my lovely, eloquent, and
tender zealot. Nay, I profess to you,
I would instantly turn back and make
her my own for life, if I could do it
by any means that would not expose
me to my own contempt ; but, in my
opinion, no man deserves the possession
of such exquisite beauty, who will con-
descend to purchase it by playing the
hypocrite or the fool ; yet, such is the
folly

folly or perverseness of women in countries where they are free, that Beauty seems to be seldom obtained upon any other terms. Men are forced to play the fool for it, in some shape or other; I begin to think the Turks are the only sensible fellows in the management of the weaker sex; so, if the divine Giuliana does not reconcile me to Europe, you may perhaps hear very soon that I am gone to pitch my tent with the Musulmen; yet, as Osman says in my *Cornelia's* favourite play,

“ Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me.”

Alas! like that generous and ill-fated Sultan, with the purest relish for the refined enjoyments of chaste affection, and with the prospect of having them within my grasp, I am destined perhaps to derive only wretchedness from

from her whom I fondly hoped to make the most happy, as I think her the most lovely, of women; but, in spite of my wounded pride, I am still, I perceive, playing the foolish lover on this paper, and continuing to prate to you of my mistress, after protesting that I would not say a syllable more. Adieu, my dear friend. I charge you and the kind Lucy not to be too anxious about me. Yet write to me, I entreat you, and do not fail to let me know how Cornelia supports my absence. If you direct to Genoa, your letters will certainly find

Your sincere
and affectionate

SEYMOUR.

Inclosed

Inclosed in the preceding Letter.

*An exact Account of my last conference
with Cornelia.*

Y O U will recollect, my dear Edmund, that, in order to give my lovely invalid sufficient time and tranquillity to recruit her spirits at Mr. Danvers's, I refrained from appearing there till after she had dined. On my sudden entrance, a smile of surprize, and I believe of tender satisfaction, illuminated her countenance. She seemed pleased to find me so familiarly acquainted with a worthy old clergyman. But when the parson, who is a man of eager spirits, contrived, a little too rapidly perhaps, to leave us shut up alone in his little parlour, she seemed to be alarmed, and would have quitted

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the room. Upon my humble supplication that she would listen with patience to many important things I had to say to her, she sat down with a placid dignity that filled me with a mixed sensation of awe and delight. I began by expressing my tender fears concerning the very delicate state of her health and spirits. I said that I had sacrificed my highest joy in the daily sight of her at your brother's manor; an idea ill-founded perhaps, yet certainly generous, that her mind might be more tranquil if I quitted the party. Here, Edmund, the lovely creature blushed immoderately, from a fear, I believe, that I alluded to her jealousy of Louisa. I soon relieved her from that apprehension; by shewing her I meant only that embarrassment and quietude which naturally arises between

tween two people who have much to say to each other on the most delicate of subjects, and have not arrived at the period appointed for discussing it; I hoped that we might both be more tranquil in a short separation; but, on my side, I had felt all the pains of that egregious mistake; the attempt to direct my thought to other objects had only convinced me that to pass even a day from her was torment; that, finding my life a burthen to me, in the cruel suspense I laboured under, I could no longer delay to solicit a promise of her hand; that my hopes were founded, not only on that ardent and perfect love which triumphs over fear, but on the animating assurances which I had received from many of our common friends, who considered us as happily formed for each other,

and who had confirmed me in the blissful persuasion that my passionate attachment to her had awakened a tender partiality in her bosom, which I regarded as the pride of my life, and the basis of my felicity. When I paused, and waited for her reply with an anxiety as intense as if her sentence were to fix my eternal doom ; instead of casting her modest eyes towards the ground, she fixed them upon mine with a look that seemed to scrutinize my soul, and, without any prudish efforts to force from me her hand, which I had fondly clasped, she said, " You know, my dear Sir, that I have professed to treat you with the frank and ingenuous tenderness of a sister : my obligations to you are infinite ; my esteem and admiration of your character not inferior to that of the many friends

by

by whom you are so zealously beloved. How far those kind and well-meaning friends may have flattered and deluded you and themselves in what they have said on a prospect of our union, is a point that must depend entirely on yourself. "Then you *will be mine*, angelic creature!" cried I, in a transport of frantic joy; for I construed the last sentence into an immediate consent. "Pardon me, my too hasty friend, she continued with a serious air that half petrified me, I have said no such thing. Do not, I conjure you, wrest any of my words to a wrong meaning; and I promise you in return, that, difficult and painful as I find it is to speak to you at large on this subject, I will yet endeavour to speak to you with all that unequivocal openness of heart which constitutes in

my opinion the essence of true friendship." I thanked her, kissed her hand, and continued to listen in silent adoration. "I will not pretend, said the dear ingenuous creature, to be angry with you for a step which has however surprized me. It is natural for you to wish a speedy termination to your suspense. Indeed it is highly desirable for us both that nothing like indecision should appear between us. I have told you with great sincerity, that it was my resolution to live unmarried for the sake of those dear children who have the most engaging claims to my love, and have been peculiarly recommended to my care. Men are not apt, and I confess they have no great reason, to give entire credit to such resolutions. At a time when my solicitude for your life made
me

me extremely anxious to tranquillize your agitated spirits, I gave you a promise, which, believe me, I shall never wish to retract, ‘that you shall never see me the wife of another.’ I will confess to you, my dear friend, that this was not a promise of mere pity, but of genuine affection. Yes, Seymour, I am not ashamed to say that I love you, because my reason has taught me to set bounds to my regard; and I can tell you with firmness, though not without pain, that I must and will reject your very flattering offer, because there is an insurmountable obstacle to our union, which some late occurrences, and your own conscious mind, will explain to you.” With my veins thrilling with rapture at the sweet avowal of her love, I had caught her in my arms before she uttered the

steady and stern declaration that she would not indulge it. "No, I exclaimed with mingled sensations of transport and of horror, there is no obstacle—there shall be none; we are united by mutual love, the most sacred of all bonds; and no powers in the world shall divide us." "There is a power more sacred than Love, replied the stedfast angel; and it grieves me, Seymour, to the soul, to perceive it is a power that you do not acknowledge: I need not tell you, she continued, that I mean Religion—a power which, I trust, will ever regulate my conduct, and which forbids me to be your wife."

I endeavoured, though I believe very awkwardly, to treat her apprehensions of my irreligion with levity; but the offended angel rebuked me, and said, "I beg, Sir, that our conversation

versation may be serious ; if you have no respect for Religion, you at least profess yourself most inviolably attached to Truth and Honour ; and indeed I must do you the justice to say, that I never knew any human being on whose generous veracity I could more implicitly confide : wretched indeed should I feel myself at this moment, if I were destitute of that consolatory confidence ; but my esteem for you, Seymour, is such, that, I am firmly persuaded, you have truth and magnanimity sufficient to support a weak woman against yourself. Instead of trying to delude me by any species of hypocrisy into a marriage, which must render us both wretched if our religious sentiments are so widely different as I have reason to apprehend, you, I am convinced, will have the genero-

sity to avow that difference, if it exists, and to applaud my adherence to my duty in pronouncing it an insurmountable obstacle to our union." I thanked her for the noble confidence which she placed in my truth; and assured her most solemnly, that I would never attempt to deceive her in any article whatever; still repeating, that there is, and shall be, no obstacle to our union.

Here, Edmund, the kind soul in her turn caught a sudden ray of illusive hope, by half construing my words into a confession of faith; and, looking at me with an angelic sweetnes of countenance, she said, "Can you, Seymour, can you truly affirm, that you revere and believe in that Religion which I have been taught to regard as the only sure foundation of happiness, both in this world and the next?" I

en-

endeavoured to evade the question, by vindicating the freedom of thought, and the native rights of the mind, to keep any ideas secret that related only to Heaven and itself. But, shrinking from me with a face of horror, she said, “I know, Seymour, you are too noble to utter a direct falsehood; and do not, I intreat you, do not stoop to an evasion; there is no necessity for any thing so foreign to your nature. I have no right to pry farther into your sentiments; I have done with the subject for ever, and have only to pray, which I do most devoutly, that, however misguided your early life may be, you may not end your days in this terrible delusion.” Here the tender enthusiast cast upon me a look so piteous, that, I believe, at that moment she beheld me

in

in her fancy hurried away from her by fiends, and sinking into eternal perdition. The image, whatever it was, overwhelmed her ; she burst into tears, hid her lovely troubled countenance for a few moments, and then endeavoured to quit the room. This, however, I could not suffer her to do. I detained her by passionate supplications. I conjured her not to be so flagrantly unjust as to condemn me unheard. I said, that she had hastily and cruelly adopted the most terrific ideas of my impiety from the base suggestions of a proud, pharisaical priest, who injured me in her opinion, because, with a foolish goodnature to indulge his passion for wine, I had plunged into occasional intemperance, which I had not a priestly stomach to bear. I was growing still more severe against my sanctified enemy

enemy Dr. Ayton, when Cornelia interrupted me with vehement displeasure, and said with an unusual keenness of manner, “ You give me but too evident proofs of an unchristian spirit, in this asperity against a worthy Divine, who did full justice to your many virtues, and only said of your failings what his duty and his conscience obliged him to say.” I caught fire at this double insult ; this reproof to me, and panegyric on the man whom I have reason to detest. I reminded my severe monitor of the many diabolical injuries which these over-righteous zealots have committed in every age, under the stale pretences of their duty and their conscience ; and I protested that I had rather be the vilest outcast of the world, abandoned by earth and Heaven, than one of these sanctified dealers in
f slander,

f slander, who poison the peace of their acquaintance by misrepresentations of men more honest than themselves, and at the same time pretend to be the only true servants to the God of Truth.

“ This Divine, said I, whom you commend, my dear Cornelia, so much beyond his desert, has impressed a barbarous panic on your tender imagination ; he has made you consider me as a monster of impiety : I am apprised, you see, of the brutal idea, and of the brutal expression, with which he laboured to divide us ; but I will appeal to your own honest heart, against your terrified imagination, except in that fatal night when intoxication bereaved me of my sences, and when true charity would have cast a veil over my frantic words and actions, have I ever merited this outrageous appellation ?

Nay,

Nay, I will go much farther: I will consent to rest all my hopes on the issue of this candid question, Do you not think in your conscience, from the perfect knowledge you have of my general character, that if you bless me with your hand, my future life will be affectionate and virtuous?" "Ah, Seymour, said the dear creature with a soft emotion in which Love and Terror were blended, you have such insinuating address, that I must not listen to you on a point in which it would prove so very fatal to me to have my weak reason overwhelmed or deluded. I shall be ever ready to do the most grateful justice to your many noble and engaging qualities; but I must never forget that it is my duty, and my determination, to protest, in the most decisive manner, that nothing shall ever tempt

tempt me to become the wife of an Infidel." I remonstrated against the injustice of giving this title to any man who paid a decent regard to the established Religion of his country. We skirmished for sometime on this ground, till at last, finding her inflexible, and being sorely galled by some harsh things she said, I went to summon my reverend ally Mr. Danvers to my aid, and cherished a little hope that I might be able, with his assistance, to give a more happy turn to the contest.

" Since, Madam, said I, introducing my venerable old friend, since you are so cruelly deaf to every thing I say in my own favour, will you have the condescension to let this worthy man of God plead with you in my behalf? He does not reckon me a monster of impiety, though a wretch of hs order

der has basely represented me as such to you." "I am sorry, Madam, said the good Danvers, that many of our dignified clergy are so apt to forget that charitable meekness and indulgence, which would become them much better than the contemptuous and cruel pride with which they often treat persons whom they suppose inferior to themselves in holiness, because their station is different. I was once nearly branded as an Atheist myself, by an offended Bishop, because I had the spirit in my young days to resist an arbitrary abuse of his episcopal privileges. I triumphed in the vindication of my character ; but have suffered not a little, perhaps, in my ecclesiastical fortune. The rank of Mr. Seymour happily exempts him from being injured in the manner that we poor little par-

sons may be injured ; yet if any cruel misrepresentation has prejudiced him in your good opinion, I will venture to say, my dear Lady, that such prejudice is a greater misfortune to him than the loss of the richest benefice in the kingdom could be to me ; and I shall think myself happy indeed if I am able to redress the wrong that has been done, and to reinstate him in your favour. For my part, I have ever regarded those men as the most meritorious servants of God, who do, in proportion to their abilities, the greatest number of good deeds ; and I believe it would be difficult to find any man of Mr. Seymour's age, in the kingdom, who has been more distinguished by acts of charity and munificence. For my own part, I am bound to bear witness to his virtues as long as I exist,

I exist, for he has saved one unhappy child of mine from impending destruction, and given efficacy and happiness to the honest exertions of a second. We have all the highest reason to bless him; and it would grieve me to the soul to see a lady so lovely, and so truly beloved as you are, make such a suitor unhappy (perhaps for life) in consequence of any religious prejudice against him, unworthily instilled into your tender mind." It was in this manner, my dear Edmund, that my honest parson began to trumpet forth my praises; while I watched every change in the varying features of Cornelia. Though she listened to Danvers with more serenity than she did to me, there was still an air of trouble on her countenance, and, instead of encouraging my advocate by a smile of acquiescence in

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his panegyric, she seemed to be collecting all the powers of her mind to support a firm resistance against the combined petitioners by whom she saw herself so pertinaciously besieged. From the expression of her face while Danvers was speaking, I expected a very tart reply; but here I was agreeably disappointed. With that engaging and majestic mildness which is peculiar to herself, she said to my warm-hearted panegyrist, "We are not likely, my good Sir, to differ on the generosity of Mr. Seymour, to which it seems we have both of us very uncommon obligations. For my own part, I am willing to consider it as a new proof of his generosity towards me, that he has chosen a man of your age and character to be the arbitrator of the painful but important difference between us.

For

For you, my worthy old friend, you are involved in a situation somewhat similar to mine. I can feel for you, as I feel for myself; you are partly overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude and attachment to Mr. Seymour, and yet will find yourself, as I am, under a bitter necessity to pronounce against him. I am confident that a man so respectable as you are for a long life of piety will never advise me to accept as my husband an enemy to the God whom you serve." "Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the spirited Danvers. If I were weak and wicked enough to do so for any worldly temptation, believe me, Madam, I should be, like the penitent and pious Cranmer, distracted by the sense of my own infirmity, and eager to atone for it by martyrdom. But, on the other side, my dear lady, let

us be cautious for Heaven's sake, and not treat any person too hastily as an enemy to God. Surely that very hard appellation cannot be justly applied to our generous friend. I speak not with any reference to his bounty towards myself. There have been, God knows, many enemies of God, who have lavished their treasure on his unworthy ministers; but surely these men have been widely different in their characters and their pursuits from Mr. Seymour." Here, Edmund, the gentle Cornelia appeared confused; seemed to think she had gone too far, and looked half-relenting. I would not interrupt my devout advocate, and only pressed her hand in silence. "I will tell you, my dear Madam, very frankly, continued Danvers, that Mr. Seymour has confessed to me that his mind was never

ver disciplined and instructed, as it ought to have been, in the principles of our faith. Like most young men of his rank, he has hitherto thought too little or too lightly of our most important concerns; yet, instead of calling him an enemy to Religion, I should rather call him its friend, since he expresses a great desire to adopt more serious ideas, and since he pursues the most likely method to make him a good and religious man, by trying to connect himself with a lady so attached to her sacred duties, and by promising that his children shall have the advantage, which he has unhappily wanted himself, of an early religious education. Surely a man so benevolently disposed will be gradually enlightened by the perfect knowledge of that Divine Master whom he is desirous to know, and

whom, when he has once truly known the beatitude of his service, he can never forsake. Your virtue, my dear Madam, will have the glory and the delight of accomplishing a work so angelic. Do not, therefore, I entreat you, by a precipitate rejection, exasperate the high but well-disposed spirit of an ardent young man, who loves you almost to distraction. Do not make him, what he has been too hastily called, an enemy to Religion." Cornelia was so deeply affected by this unexpected intreaty from the good old Divine, that her gentle bosom began to heave with emotions that I was willing to suppose the effect of returning tenderness. As she had hid her lovely impassioned countenance, I thought I had every reason to construe her silence into consent, and exclaimed with impetuous

rap-

rapture, " My sweet angel yields to your heavenly persuasion ! She will be mine ! O thou worthy man of God, said I, clasping the hand of the delighted Danvers, thou shalt speedily complete thy blessed work. Here is an instrument that will authorize thee to unite us immediately for ever."

At these words, I drew the special licence from my pocket ; but it seemed to turn into a warrant for my death, the moment I beheld the countenance with which the recovering Cornelia now gazed upon it. Her modest eyes lightened with indignation at the sight. She accused me of presumptuous vanity—of indelicate precipitation. She expressed a horror of seeing her name indecently and fraudulently united to mine in the public papers. In short, she discovered a degree of anger and

resentment that I thought her gentle spirit incapable of feeling upon any provocation; but as this was the mere anger of offended modesty, which I had not meant to offend, I thought myself almost sure of appeasing it. I assured her with great truth, that I had taken effectual means to guard against a consequence which had shocked her imagination so much; and that, so far from being really guilty of any intended offence to her delicacy, I was ready at that instant to pay it perhaps the highest compliment that was ever offered to that most amiable quality in woman, that if she would only permit the excellent Mr. Danvers to read the service to us, I would allow her, the moment it was ended, to banish me to any part of the globe, and for any period she pleased—I
would

would never claim her as my wife till the very hour arrived that she should herself appoint. I said much on this topic, and with a romantic tenderness and sincerity that entirely banished her resentment. She appeared indeed so much softened, that my reverend ally, conceiving fresh hopes, began to renew his supplication ; but, before he could finish a single sentence, a most deep and terrific sigh burst from her heart, and she exclaimed, "O Danvers, Danvers, is it possible that you can desert me ! then Heaven is my only refuge ; and Heaven inspire me for my defence !" "Desert you, Madam ! cried the high-spirited though simple Danvers, much galled by her expression, Heaven is my witness, that I never yet deserted man, woman, or child, in any kind of distress ; and
you,

you, my dear Madam, would be the last person in the world towards whom I could be tempted to act so dishonorable a part. I may be deluded by my own gratitude ; but I protest to God that I speak unconscious of any improper or selfish bias. I have advised you to accept my friend, and have given that advice, not from a sordid motive, but upon a religious principle ; because I deem it our general duty rather to allure a well-meaning, though unsettled mind, to the true Religion, by gentleness and indulgence, than to drive it into confirmed infidelity by any rigorous treatment." "Forgive me, my venerable friend, said Cornelia, extending her hand to Danvers with a sweetnes of manner peculiar to herself, forgive me, I entreat you ; and be assured that I have the most

most perfect confidence in your integrity. The mild and Christian principle which you have professed does you honour as a minister to the God of mercy; but a little reflection will convince you, my good friend, that it cannot be applicable to my cruel situation. When you hear the arguments and the feelings which I have to oppose to your advice, and which render me inflexible in the resolution I have taken, you, I am sure, will never wish me to give my hand to any person who considers that Gospel, by which we endeavour to regulate our lives, as a mass of absurdity and imposture." "Barbarous, barbarous Cornelia! cried I, with a brain that seemed on fire with indignation, is it by cruelty alone that you can prove yourself a Christian? But let me shew you, Madam, the base-

baseness, the inhumanity, of this treatment. I will suppose for a moment that such an idea as you impute to me exists in my mind. Is it candid, is it charitable, is it just, that you should violently tear open the recesses of my soul, force from thence any secret I would hide, and make it the ostensible ground of your argument against me? Let me shew you the unutterable barbarity of such proceeding, by turning it back upon yourself. Let me suppose for an instant that you had a foible hid in your heart, which you would rather die than discover—let me suppose (forgive a vain supposition introduced only for argument)—let me suppose that you loved me with an affection so exquisitely jealous that you could not see me throw an idle sportive arm around a young damsel with-

out being ready to faint at the sight; would it be fair in me to argue, as you have argued, from the supposed foible of my antagonist? could I have a right to say, Madam, I have searched into your heart and soul, and you ought to marry me because you will die with jealousy if you refuse? Yet, if I argued thus, I should argue far less ungenerously than my Cornelia has now argued against me."—Here, Edmund, I must confess to you that my own heart began to revolt against my tongue; and though I could not recede, I felt that resentment had hurried me too far, when I saw the deep and burning blush that seemed to drown all the features of Cornelia, when I hazarded my supposition, too cruelly founded on truth. As soon as her eloquent blood betrayed her emotion, she hid

hid her face from us. I paused for her reply, half ashamed of what I had said, and half terrified at her expected reproof. But here the gentle creature triumphed over me by language a thousand times more powerful than the most vehement invective.

Removing her handkerchief from her lovely and half recovered countenance, she turned to the good astonished old Divine, and said to him, with an inconceivable tenderness of voice, "Mr. Danvers, I consider you as a very kind and very indulgent father; I shall not therefore scruple to confess in your presence all the weakness of a heart that is weak in the extreme; yet is still, I trust, supported by Heaven. Mr. Seymour, I find, is perfectly apprised that my affection for him has run into great extravagance and folly.

I am

I am not angry with those who have betrayed to him my infirmities, because I know they have been influenced by the purest and most benevolent intentions, and because I have no vain wish to appear in Mr. Seymour's eyes superior to what I am, a very weak and fond woman. O Seymour, you accuse me of cruelty and pride : I hope I never had those qualities ; but, if I had, I am now humbled in the dust : this venerable, this indulgent judge of human frailties will pity and forgive me, while I own to you, to soften your exasperated spirit, that you are as dear to me as my own soul. Both he and Heaven, I trust, will applaud me for adding, that you are not, and I am convinced you never can be, so dear to me as the more precious souls of my children!" This repeated and most in-

ingenuous avowal of her love melted me into tears. I threw myself at her feet, and protested with great truth, that if her children had been my own I could not idolize them more than I do. I repeated all I had ever promised concerning their religious education. The good Danvers was greatly affected; and while he applauded Cornelia's maternal piety, expressed a hope that he should yet live to see us forming the happiest family in the world.—“Never, Sir,” said the sighing, yet more and more resolute Cornelia. There is a noble, romantic, yet dangerous, pride of spirit in Mr. Seymour, which renders him very unwilling to relinquish any opinions he has adopted; and he has been most unhappily led to think the Gospel an imposture. Good Heaven, how grievous it is, that a mind

mind so generous, so tender, so apparently formed by nature to exult in the blessings of Christianity, should consider the Prophets and Apostles of that Religion as a set of despicable deceivers.

“ Whence, but from Heaven, could men
 “ unskill’d in arts,
“ In several ages born, in several parts,
“ Weave such agreeing truths ? or how,
 “ or why,
“ Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie
“ Unask’d ; their pains ungrateful, their
 “ advice
“ Starving their gain, and martyrdom
 “ their price ?”

While the beautiful enthusiast repeated these spirited verses of Dryden, there was an angelic lustre in her countenance, superior to every thing that I ever beheld. Danvers and I stood almost entranced with admiration.—

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“ Strange and terrible, continued the lovely preacher, as Infidelity appears to a tender and devout spirit, we see, alas ! that it is dreadfully prevalent ; and particularly among those persons of rank and fortune who are most likely to be the associates of Mr. Seymour : and hence there can be little probability of an early change in his mind. Indeed I have read, in the works of one who had deeply studied all human failings, and who judged of them with true Christian tenderness, that impiety is of all mortal infirmities the most difficult of cure ; because the pride of incredulity, different from many dangerous passions, which naturally decline in the latter stages of life, springs afresh in that season, and is fortified by age *.

You,

* Note by the Editor.

Cornelia seems to have alluded here to the following passage in the eloquent Sermons of Maf-

You, my dear unhappy Seymour, are probably destined to a long life; and it shall be my fervent prayer that you may prove an happy exception to this rule; but without any expectation that we can be ever united. I am convinced that we never can. And, believe me, in my firm rejection of your offers, however cruel you may call it, I am influenced by motives of kindness towards you, as well as by a sense of my own duty. Were I your wife at this moment, I should see you supremely

Maffillon : " Il en est peu qui reviennent des " routes égarées où l'impiété les conduit. L'on " ne revient guères de la dépravation impie de " la raison. Les années murissent les passions, " mais l'orgueil de l'incrédulité renait et se for- " tifie avec les années. Plus les années de- " viennent sérieuses, plus elles donnent du cré- " dit, et une sorte de bon air à la philosophie " de l'impiété ; et la vieillesse est le tems où " l'impiéte s'en fait plus d'honneur, et où elle lui " attire aussi plus d'éloges de la part de ses imi- " tateurs." Paraphrase du Pseaume XIII.

wretched." Here I interrupted her with vehement protestations of her mistake. But she replied with a calm dignity, "Hear me patiently, I entreat you, Seymour, because, since I have ingenuously laid open all the fond weakness of my heart to you, and to our venerable friend, I can now talk to you with an ease and confidence that I never could attain before; and I am persuaded I shall make you though not a convert to Religion (would to Heaven I could!) yet a convert to the propriety and to the kindness of my conduct. I must repeat and maintain what I have said: you must be wretched were I your wife; because you must see me haunted by terrors that you could neither cure nor condemn. I should not only feel that painful solicitude for your eternal felicity which I must

I must ever feel, however divided from you ; but I should be distracted by an incessant dread that my dear boys, who, as they grew up, must naturally look to you as

“ The glass of fashion, and the mould
“ of form,

“ Th' observ'd of all observers ;”

would imperceptibly catch from you that impiety which you would be too generous to teach them. They would laugh at their poor credulous devout mother ; and, tainted by the infectious though unavowed spirit of the alluring Infidel, they would plunge——

O God ! my whole heart is convulsed with anguish at the bare idea of this universal misery. No, Seymour, whatever agonies I may endure in tearing myself from you, nothing shall ever tempt me to incur the hazard of prov-
ing

ing the bane, the perdition, of my children ! You, my good Danvers, you will no more advise me to a marriage that offers such a prospect to the keen perceptions of a mother." " No, my dear Madam," cried the deeply-affected old man ; I would sooner forfeit all the blessings I owe to the bounty of Mr. Seymour, and all the little property I possess in the world, than urge you to act in opposition to the dictates of your own angelic spirit, and of that Heaven by whom you seem to be inspired." The honest old man was quite overwhelmed by this scene ; and having kissed the hand of Cornelia, and bathed it with his tears, he quitted the room, to tranquillize or to conceal the visible disorder of his nerves. For my own part, I was not so much softened by her maternal tenderness,

derness, nor even by the frank confession of her love to me, as I was galled, mortified, and exasperated, by her saintly pride, and determinate rejection of my hand. As Danvers was going out of the room, she had desired him to order her chaise; and though the old man, in a broken voice, had begged her to stay the night, she peremptorily refused, and pressed for the carriage immediately. This contributed to increase my spleen, my resentment, my depression. I sat confounded and stupified with a thousand wretched sensations. The poor Caroline came in to us, trembling in her turn at the proud saint's displeasure. But to Caroline she was all goodness—pardoned her for her share in the conspiracy, and renewed her commands for the carriage.. This obstinate

stinate resolution to depart provoked me to upbraid her for her pride; but, by an affectionate rebuke, she reduced me to kneel, and ask her forgiveness. She forgave me; but was resolute to go. This rendered me half frantic again; and at last, astonished and almost petrified at her inflexibility, I sat silent and motionless, while she bade me farewell, and hastened to her chaise.

All the subsequent occurrences, my dear Edmund, I have related to you already. I shall therefore close this long narrative by observing, that the whole adventure appears to me rather as a wild and troubled dream than as a series of incidents that have really passed. What influence they may have on my future life, Heaven only knows. At present I pity Cornelia,

and pity myself. Our strong mutual affection has made us both completely uncomfortable ; nor can I see any clear prospect that we shall ever conduce to the happiness of each other.

“ Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.”

“ Such devilish acts Religion could persuade.”

These, I think, are the words of poor Creech, in translating this celebrated line : but if they are so, he translated like a booby ; and his language is too gross to be applied, even by offended passion, to my dear and delicate, though inflexible, Cornelia.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.





